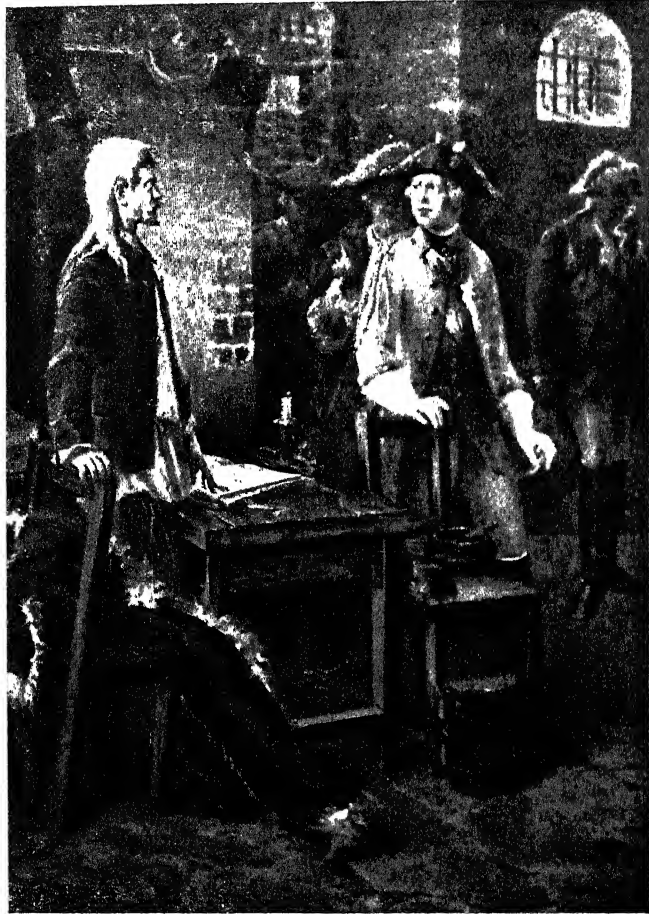


THE RUSSIAN BASTILLE



EMPEROR PETER III. VISITING IVAN VI. IN HIS CELL IN
SCHLUESSELBURG



BAKOUNIN

THE RUSSIAN BASTILLE

OR THE SCHLUESSELBURG FOR-
TRESS ¶ BY I. P. YOUNG
TRANSLATED FROM THE RUS-
SIAN BY DR. A. S. RAPPOPORT
ILLUSTRATED BY 16 PICTURES
AND PUBLISHED AT LONDON
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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO THE
MEMORY OF THE BEAUTIFUL SOPHIA
GINSBURG, WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE
IN THE CASEMATES OF SCHLUESSEL-
BURG, IN ORDER TO ESCAPE A FATE
WHICH EVERY NOBLE WOMAN FEARS
MORE THAN DEATH.

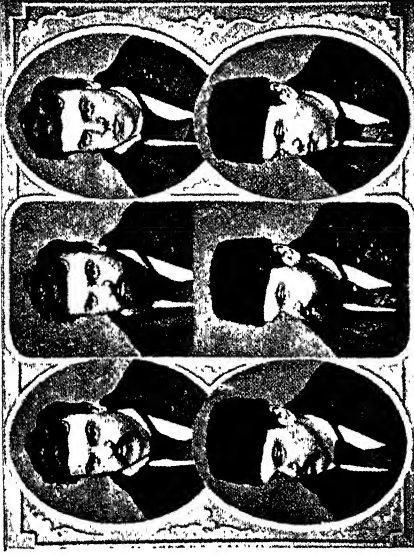
A. S. R.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

‘HAD I been told in my childhood,’ says the author of the present book, I. P. Youvatshev, ‘that one day people would lock me up in a narrow cage, deprive me of sunshine and air, and keep me there for years, I should never have believed it.’ And yet the day did come when he was torn away from those most dear to him, and condemned to solitary confinement, in which he struggled hard not to lose his reason. So great were his sufferings that when he was at last sent to Sakhalin among criminals and assassins, he greeted this exile as a joyful occurrence and a happy deliverance. For was he not going once more to behold the sky, the sun and the stars, and, what was more, to hear the sound of human voices—the voices of criminals and outcasts, but human voices after all?

Ivan Pavlovitsh Youvatshev was born in 1860. After passing his preliminary examinations he entered the Naval Technical Institute, which he left in 1878, and subsequently served as an officer in the Black Sea Fleet. Being of a serious dis-

position and finding no pleasure in the ordinary occupations of his colleagues, such as card-playing, drinking, and flirting, he worked very assiduously and read a great deal on political and scientific subjects. It was natural, therefore, for him to develop a keen interest in the sufferings of the Russian nation, and to manifest sympathy with all liberal measures intended to ameliorate the fate of the oppressed millions. Youvatshev was thus one of the 'thinking' officers of the Russian Navy. But 'to think' is a crime even in so-called Constitutional Russia of 1909; it was much more so in 1882-83. The famous Degaev, who had turned spy in the pay of the Secret Police, had, at that period, handed over a list of all those officers who were regarded by the revolutionary party as 'thinking' young men to the head of the Secret Police, and many arrests were the result of this act of treachery. Among the arrested was also the author of the present book; he was taken to the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul on August 13, 1883. Although there was practically nothing to prove his revolutionary tendencies, he was tried as the organizer of a naval military circle and condemned to death. The sentence was afterwards commuted to one of penal servitude in the mines for an unlimited period. Before, however, Youvatshev and his



DEGAEV : SIX MINIATURES

fellow-sufferers were sent to Sakhalin they had to undergo a term of solitary confinement in the living tombs of Schluesselburg. Many lost their reason, many others escaped the agony of suffering by courting death ; Youvatshev himself was in frequent fear of going mad. How he succeeded in keeping his mental balance he relates in the thrilling pages of the present work. In 1886 he was informed that the authorities had decided to transfer him to Sakhalin, where he would undergo a term of fifteen years' penal servitude. Some time before his departure for Sakhalin he was visited in his cell by the Assistant Home Secretary. The latter, on being informed that Youvatshev was preparing a new translation of the Gospels from the Greek, and believing that the prisoner was religiously inclined, advised him to become a monk—by which step he would be able to escape penal servitude.

‘I have no inclination for a monastic life,’ replied the prisoner.

‘But I am anxious to assist you,’ said the high official, ‘and am therefore offering you the only means which will make you free. You have no other hope.’

‘I place my hope in God alone,’ replied Ivan Pavlovitsh.

The Cabinet Minister shrugged his shoulders and left him to his fate.

On leaving Schluesselburg, Youvatshev was detained for some time in the casemates of the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, and only in 1887, four years after the day of his arrest, did he reach Sakhalin.

The life on the island was by no means a pleasant one, but it was not to be compared with the existence in the living tomb of Schluesselburg. On Sakhalin he was again allowed to enjoy the sunshine, to breathe the fragrant air of fields and forests, to communicate his thoughts to other men—in a word, to feel himself again a human being, a privilege which was denied to him during his confinement in Schluesselburg. In virtue of the Imperial Manifesto of 1891, his term of servitude was reduced to one-third, and in 1895 he left Sakhalin for Vladivostock, where he was engaged in the construction of a railway in the capacity of technical engineer. In 1897 he was allowed to return to Russia, where he found his aged parents still alive. In 1899 he was reinstated in his civil rights, and has since then devoted his time and labour to literary activity and research, publishing a number of books and articles, among them the present reminiscences. Youvatshev is thus one of the few who were fortunate enough to escape death and madness in Schluesselburg and afterwards in the mines. From the living tombs of the Russian

Bastille he returned to life and even happiness. But how many have been swallowed up by the Moloch Autocracy and cut off in the prime of life! How many a noble existence has been crushed in those living tombs where Russian Autocracy is constantly flinging her best and noblest citizens, whose only crime may be summed up in the one word—Thought. Russia's Poets and Prophets, Russia's Thinkers and Philosophers, Russia's Bakounins,* Hertzens, and Kropotkins, have either suffered this fate, or are in constant danger of being visited by it. The words, 'Woe unto the nations who stone their prophets!' may rightly be applied in modern times to the Russians. The fate of our author and of his fellow-prisoners mentioned in his reminiscences calls to our mind the names of many Russian Authors and Poets, many Thinkers, who have perished since the noble family of Romanov has been presiding over the destinies of the nation.

If not exactly stoned, the Russian Poets and Authors—the Prophets of modern times—have met with sufferings and premature death. They have either been hanged or have been sent to Siberian mines among the lowest and worst

* Michael Bakounin was detained for eight years in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, and then exiled to Siberia—whence he escaped.

criminals. 'The history of Russian thinkers,' Alexander Herzen once exclaimed, 'is a long list of martyrs and a register of convicts.' A terrible destiny awaits in Russia those who dare to step beyond the line traced by the hand of the Government, or who venture to look over the wall erected by Imperial Ukase. In the most civilized countries of Western Europe ever and anon a cross-current of reaction traverses the stream of intellectual evolution: narrow-minded zealots, hypocritical bigots, false prophets and literary Gibeonites, gossiping old women arrayed in the mantles of philosophers, do their best to put fetters on the independent thought of man, to nip free intellectual development in the very bud, and crush it under the iron heel of tradition and authority. These reactionary tendencies, however, are only exceptions in Western Europe. Not so in Russia. There, the Thinkers whose life the paternal Imperial Government spares die in the prime of youth, before they have had time to develop; they wither like blossoms hurrying to quit life before they could bear fruit. Their number is legion, but I shall mention at least a few of the names of Russian Authors whose glorious talent and melancholy fate add to the ignominy of Russia's history, and who, if not hanged, were, like Youvatshev, either confined in the fortress or sent to the mines, but were not

so lucky as our author in being able to return to life and activity.

Nicolai Ivanovitsh Novikov (1744-1818), journalist and philanthropist, who had devoted his life and his property to the welfare of his nation, endeavouring to raise its low intellectual level by founding schools and libraries, was arrested in 1792 by order of Catherine II., the friend of Diderot and Voltaire, and confined in the fortress at Schluesselburg.

Ryleev (1795-1826), a poet of considerable talent, was hanged with four others in 1826 by order of Tsar Nicholas I.

Prince Odoievsky (1802-39), whose poems are full of poignancy and pathos, was sent to Siberia, where he had to pass his life as a common soldier. His is not the only case where the Russian Government, by way of punishing authors for their daring words, forces them into the military service. The army seems to be considered by the Government of the Northern Empire as a kind of convict prison.

Griboyedov, Russia's Beaumarchais (1794-1829), the famous author of the comedy 'Gore ot Oomah,' or 'Too much Intelligence comes to Grief,' met with so many obstacles in his literary activity, and was so disgusted with the intellectual and moral state of Russia, that he was haunted by constant thoughts of suicide. He sought refuge in Persia, where he was murdered.

The promising poet and philosopher Wene-witinov (1805-27) died in his twenty-third year, a victim of social circumstances.

The fiery poet Alexander Polezhaev (1810-38) attracted the attention of Nicholas I. by his satirical poem 'Sashka,' which was secretly circulated among his schoolfellows. The poet was expelled from the University and sent as a common soldier to serve in a Caucasian regiment. The soldier-poet sought oblivion of his wretched life in drink, and finally died in a military hospital at the age of twenty-eight. The manner in which Polezhaev was treated by the Tsar is very characteristic of the Romanovs, who commit all their atrocities *in a spirit of clemency*.

Nicholas I. ordered Polezhaev to appear before him and to read the poem. The Tsar then *kissed* the student on the forehead, in appreciation of his talents, and afterwards ordered his enlistment in a regiment. This was evidently done with a view to breaking the independent spirit of the poet and to crushing the rising genius by cutting his wings. But this cruel joke is not the only one in which the Imperial Government of Russia indulges from time to time.

In 1836 Tshaadaev, the friend of Schelling, and author of 'L'Apologie d'un Fou,' published a letter in French in which, Prometheus-like, he cast his curse into the face of Russia. He told

her, in clear and precise words, that her past was useless, her present superfluous, and her future hopeless. Tshaadaev's letter was a trumpet-call by which he wished to rouse Russia from her sleep of inertia. But his voice was soon silenced. The Government did not punish him, but—by order of the Tsar—*Tshaadaev was declared mad*.

Bestuzhev (Marlinsky, 1795-1837), the founder of Romantic Criticism in Russia, was sent to the mines for a few years and died in the Caucasus.

Tshernyshevsky, who has been somewhat rashly styled the Russian Robespierre, but who could more correctly be compared with John Stuart Mill, created a sensation with his novel 'What shall we do?' (1863), and was consequently torn away from his literary activity and sent to Siberia.

Byelinsky (1810-48), the Russian Lessing, the famous literary critic, who exercised an immense influence upon Russian literature, died of privation in his thirty-eighth year. Where the Government does not condemn the talented men to a life of misery, to degradation and death, it puts so many obstacles in their way that they are driven to despair, and die young and wretched, victims of oppression, crushed under the iron heel of tyranny. The famous Russian novelist Dostoievsky, the eminent psychologist who, with critical scalpel in hand, analyzed the Russian soul and laid bare its most hidden cells, was sent to

Siberia for four years, where he lived among thieves and murderers. Afterwards he served as a soldier in a Siberian regiment. And how many are there—their name is legion—who have been crushed before they had had time to raise their voice! Few have sufficient strength to hide their emotions and the burning fire of enthusiasm in the innermost depths of their soul, without being consumed by the inward flame. Few indeed are those who, with fetters on hands and feet, succeed in keeping their heads erect and their spirits independent. The great Russian poet Pushkin, liberty-thirsting and revolutionary, was exiled to the Caucasus. He returned home, but soon again had to choose between a second exile or the title and uniform of Imperial Chamberlain. He chose the latter alternative.

‘In this lack of pride and power of resistance,’ says Herzen, ‘the defect of the Russian character manifests itself.’

If Tolstoi has been spared, it is not because the Government is afraid of European opinion and does not dare to touch him, but because the author of ‘Resurrection’ is absolutely harmless. The Government, on the contrary, avails itself of his doctrine of passive resistance, of castration of the will and submission, for its own purposes. Not so Gorky. If his head has been saved till now, there is no guarantee that he will not one

day share the fate of his glorious predecessors. Gorky preaches the Gospel of Independence, and is dangerous to the autocratic Government. He must therefore beware. Such is the fate of Russia's Prophets, Poets, Philosophers, and Thinkers. And the vast millions look on, apathetically and stupidly, while the best and most talented among them are crushed, while the few 'intellectuals,' of whom Russia ought to be proud, disappear prematurely for the sake of a few dissolute and brainless individuals.

From time to time the Russian nation, like a child, raises a cry, but soon, like a child again, it subsides, kisses the rod that punishes it, and cries itself to sleep, under the influence of the whisperings of mystic superstition and the vapours of vodka. And meanwhile the work of destruction continues its course. The fathomless abyss is swallowing up the best and most talented before they have time to exercise their power. Is the nation free from blame? We doubt it. If the nation at large does not directly stone its prophets, their fate is on its head nevertheless, for its passive attitude is the cause of their destruction.

‘Woe,’ therefore we repeat, ‘unto the nation that stones its prophets!’

A. S. R.

April 1909.

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THE RUSSIAN BASTILLE

THE RUSSIAN BASTILLE

INTRODUCTORY

‘There were no stars, no earth, no time,
No check, no change, no good, no crime,
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death.’

The Prisoner of Chillon.

IN the autumn of 1883, about a month after my arrest, during my solitary confinement in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, I received a visit from my sister. The interview took place in a special room, separated in the middle by two gratings running parallel at a distance of about two arsheen from each other. We entered this room through two separate doors and stood at the small aperture made in the gratings, between which sat a prison inspector of tall stature and dressed in a military uniform.

After the first words of greeting and tears, my sister said :

‘I cannot imagine what you can find to do

within these four walls. How can you exist in this tomb ?

‘I can tell you——’ I began.

‘You are not allowed to talk about it,’ the inspector curtly interrupted me.

My sister shot a glance at him and burst into tears.

More than one decade has now elapsed since that interview ; I have been detained in the meantime in the more terrible fortress of Schluesselburg, I have worked in the mines, and have sojourned on the island of Sakhalin. This was followed by a number of years during which I slowly returned home from exile. At the present moment my solitary confinement has become a distant recollection. But some terrible situations in which I have found myself are still so vividly present to my mind that, without needing to draw on my imagination, I am going to try to give briefly a reply to the question how people can exist in tombs.

I

THE TRIAL

‘Such is the idea of Christianity which, consciously or unconsciously, has been instilled into all of us from our very cradle, that the prisoner is filled with joy at the thought that the moment of his trial has arrived. The depth of his love and his strength of character are to be tested as a fighter for those ideal benefits which it has been his endeavour to obtain, not for himself, but for the people, for society, and for future generations.’—V. N. FIGNER.

It was the evening of October 1, 1884. The President of the military tribunal at St. Petersburg was reading the final sentence of the court.

From among the fourteen criminals accused of political crimes, eight were sentenced to death. Each case was summed up separately. My turn arrived. I, hearing that I was being accused of having entertained relations with the political criminals, with the naval officer Boutzevitsh and Vera Philippovna Figner, stood as if petrified. Never had I set eyes either on Boutzevitsh or on Vera Figner; never had I even seen their photographs or had any relations with them.

My only acquaintance among the accused

officers, M. Y. Ashenbrenner, who sat on the first bench, turned round to me, smiling sadly. In reply I only shrugged my shoulders. The President went on mentioning the fact of my belonging to a secret society, and of my having made one of the circle of officers of the Black Sea Fleet. But to this accusation I paid no attention. Could it be considered a crime that we young officers came together in the evening, and, behind the samovar, talked over the latest events in Russia, perhaps with a little more freedom than one is wont to find in the daily press? Did not the officer of gendarmes who accompanied me through St. Petersburg tell me in confidence that he greatly sympathized with the liberal movement? Did not even the assistant Public Prosecutor, under whose supervision our case was conducted, admit that he, too, was counted, during his University days, among the 'red ones'?

And even the judges themselves must evidently have considered my offence a very small one, if they found it necessary to add the very insignificant transgression of my acquaintanceship with political criminals. I was convinced that they had committed this mistake quite unconsciously. The examining magistrate, the Major of gendarmes, knew quite well that I had never met Vera Figner, and it was he himself who first

made me acquainted with her biography. The judges, unable to read all the documents relating to my case, decided that I must have been acquainted with Vera Figner and Boutzevitsh, since both once visited the town of Nikolaev, where the naval officers used to stay in the winter. After the final judgment has been read the accused has no right to address the court, and thus I had no opportunity of proving that this time I had been condemned unjustly.

I do not exactly remember the speech of the military Public Prosecutor, but it left upon me the impression that he was expressing his regret at having to accuse me, and acknowledged that he lacked sufficient data to enable him to demand capital punishment in my case.

As for the first Public Prosecutor, I remember that he brought me one day from the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul into the *gendarmerie*, facing the church of St. Panteleymon, and addressed me as follows :

‘ As far as your comrades are concerned, I have already decided upon the course of my action, but I cannot as yet make up my mind what to do with you.’

I looked him straight in the eyes.

‘ You hesitate,’ I thought ; ‘ you doubt whether you ought to hand me over to a military court, which means capital punishment, or have me

tried by a civil court, which would send me into some remote province like Archangelsk. Feeling that I am in your power, you take pleasure in playing with me like a cat with a mouse. What is it you want?—that I should implore your mercy and humble myself before you?

I turned my head away.

And he, who had boasted to me that at my age he, too, had belonged to the ‘red ones,’ decided that I ought to be handed over to a military court. Another detail: we were tried as if we were religious criminals.

‘You are Stundists.’

‘No; we are Baptists,’ replied the accused.

‘No; you are Stundists,’ insisted the court.

‘You will allow us to know best; we are ready to confess.’

And before the military court:

‘You belong to the party of “Popular Freedom.”’

‘No; we belong to a special military organization which has nothing in common with the terroristic tendencies of that party.’

‘No; you belong to the party of “Popular Freedom,”’ insisted the court.

The naval Lieutenant, Baron Stromberg, wished to explain the significance of our military organization, and began by comparing it with that of the Decembrists of 1825. He was not, however,

allowed to proceed, and was finally sentenced to death. We were led back to our respective cells. Two gendarmes accompanied each criminal, and we had to be very careful on the stairs, so as not to be hit by the sword of the gendarme preceding us. Some of the criminals exchanged a few short sentences. Especial animation was manifested by those who had been condemned to penal servitude. The quick punishment on the scaffold had been commuted for them into a slow one, to be dragged out over a number of years. They hoped to meet somewhere in Siberia. Poor things! They little suspected that slow death awaited them in the living tombs of Schluesselburg. Only a few of them eventually left the fortress alive.

My brother and sister did not long delay coming to see me. They knew that I had been sentenced to death, but, nevertheless, they endeavoured, amid their tears, to convince me that I would not be executed.

‘You have taken no part in assassinations, or even in attempts at any. Why should they kill you?’

I told them that I had been accused of acquaintanceship with persons whom I had never known or seen.

‘And you are silent!’ exclaimed my sister in astonishment. ‘Why don’t you protest?’

My brother supported her, and advised me to complain against the sentence of the court.

‘Leave me some Socratic consolation,’ I replied.

‘What consolation?’

‘Don’t you remember that when Socrates took the poisoned cup one of his disciples exclaimed, “You are dying innocent!” “Would you prefer to know that I am dying guilty?” replied Socrates. Allow me, too, to enjoy the consolation of knowing that I have been sentenced unjustly.’

The next day I was transferred to the Troubetzky bastion in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, where I had been detained previous to my trial. The place was the same, but the conditions were changed. My naval uniform was taken from me, and I was not allowed the linen and the blue gown from a military hospital which are granted to those still under trial. I was now clad in rough, thick linen, grey trousers and vest, and a round prisoner’s cap. Instead of meat at dinner I now received *kasha* (gruel), and instead of tea hot water. All this was done in order to make us feel the difference in our situation before and after the trial. A few days of agonized uncertainty succeeded the announcement of our sentence. The important question, ‘To be or not to be,’ had not yet been

decided. 'If they find it necessary,' I thought to myself, 'to put me to death, then they ought to punish hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands of people in Russia. No; they cannot do it.'

I felt a little more hopeful, almost convinced that I should only be exiled to Siberia. I was ready to go to the end of the world. One can live anywhere, only not in solitary confinement.

On Saturday evening, October 6, whilst listening to the chiming of the bells from the churches of the capital and pondering over human fate, I suddenly heard a noise as if of the opening and shutting of doors and of many approaching footsteps. 'Somebody going the round of the cells,' I thought. 'Who can it be?' The noise came nearer and nearer. I stood in the middle of my cell, anxiously waiting. They reach my door. It is opened.

A General!

'A messenger from the Tsar!' was the thought that flitted across my brain.

The Lieutenant-General, a grey, stout gentleman of tall stature with shoulder-knots, approached me, briefly asking:

'A naval officer?'

'Yes, a naval officer,' I replied.

'His Imperial Majesty has graciously commuted your sentence of capital punishment to

that of penal servitude in the mines for fifteen years,' said the old man, and he laid his hand feelingly on my shoulder.

He sighed heavily, coughed, made an expressive gesture with his hand, his face showing evident compassion, and then, without another word, he left the cell, accompanied by the soldiers and the prison director.

So at last I am relieved from the burden of my suspense. When shall I be sent away ?

II

PUT IN FETTERS

‘During the moments which immediately follow upon his sentence, the mind of the condemned in many respects resembles that of a man on the point of death. Quiet, and as if inspired, he no longer clings to what he is about to leave, but firmly looks in front of him, fully conscious of the fact that what is coming is inevitable.’

V. N. FIGNER.

A DAY, two, three pass. No change. Had they forgotten us? Are they waiting for the spring? Uncertainty is often full of torment. What was happening all this while outside my cell? Some of the prisoners have perhaps already been put to death. When and in what manner should we be transported to distant regions? I was completely in the dark. As personalities we were being absolutely ignored. We had become as chattels or as cattle, which are not asked into which stable they would wish to be placed, or with what food they would prefer to be fed. A presentiment as of something horrible about to happen took possession of me.

The night of October 10 arrived. I could not

sleep. I lay on the bed dressed, and suddenly jumped up and walked across the cell. At last I undressed and went to bed, but no sleep would come. Silence reigned in the prison. The cell, with one little window under the roof, and lit by a lamp, offered no point on which the eye could rest awhile. I turned my face towards the door, and watched the small aperture in it, wondering whether the eye of the jailer would appear through it. But no change even there. I rose again, and went to the iron cask fixed in the wall, to drink some water. I turned on the tap, but only a dark yellow, muddy liquid flowed from it for my refreshment.

Suddenly I heard a noise as of hasty steps along the prison corridor, then as of the opening of prison doors. I listened attentively. A minute afterwards I again heard the noise of footsteps and the dragging of slippers.

Somebody has been taken away.

Whither? For what reason? And at what hour of the night? It must be about one or two after midnight.

Silence again. I lay down. Only the noise of the wind outside could be heard. Suddenly a repetition of the sound of hasty steps and of doors being opened, but this time much nearer.

Some one else has been taken away.

What did it signify ?

My brain began to work. I began making all kinds of impossible guesses.

The footsteps were now approaching my cell. The door was hastily opened, and two soldiers entered. One of them threw me my slippers and prisoner's gown.

‘Throw the gown over your shoulders and put the slippers on your naked feet, and come with us.’

I obeyed. We descended the stairs into the courtyard of the bastion, where we usually walked about for recreation. It was pitch-dark. I could scarcely distinguish the path leading to a small-sized building in the middle of the courtyard. It was the bath-room.

I felt as if something was squeezing my heart. Why was I being led at such an hour into the baths ? Why into this completely isolated building—isolated from the prison and any habitation ? And why was I dragged in such cold weather from my bed, clad only in my linen and a thin gown over my shoulders ?

The gendarme opened the door, and I stood like one turned to stone by the spectacle which presented itself to me under the strong light of the lamp. On the floor stood an anvil and hammers ; chains and other instruments were lying about. Two peasants in red shirts, their sleeves tucked up, produced the impression upon

me of public executioners. In a corner stood the tall figure of the prison director. The first thought that flashed across my brain was the torture-chamber, the public executioner, torture.

‘Sit down on the floor,’ commanded the prison director. I had scarcely sat down when my naked foot was seized, and the peasants began to pull it with the iron instrument.

‘They are putting me in shackles,’ I guessed, and my first fear of torture disappeared. But it was torture, after all. Only with difficulty could I bear the pain when they placed my foot on the anvil and began to rivet the fetters with the hammer—*i.e.*, to flatten the rivet on the iron ring. Every stroke on the iron sent a vibration of pain through the whole body. ‘What a barbarous method,’ I thought, full of indignation, ‘to beat the thick iron with the sharp edges on a human foot! Could one not invent something more humane and delicate than this thick iron?’ To judge from the workmanship, these fetters must have dated from the time of Peter the Great, if not from earlier still. I recalled a Russian proverb: ‘God gave a free world, but the devil forged its chains.’

At last my feet were iron-clad. I had never before seen and never could have imagined the arrangement and construction of these fetters, nor the method whereby they were forged on the

foot, although I had often been reminded of them by the students' song :

‘ Let us drink to him
Who drags his shackles,
Who, deprived of freedom,
Is now in the mines.’

Now I, too, might be counted among those of the order of prisoners suffering for an ideal. There are many orders in the world. There are chains to put round the neck ; there is an order of the garter. But if anywhere, it is on the fetters of our prisoners that the famous motto *Honi soit qui mal y pense* ought to be engraved. Trousers of a grey cloth which I had never seen before were now brought. The speciality of these trousers consisted in their having buttons in the place of seams, so as to enable the prisoner to put them on over his fetters. I was dressed in a vest, in peasant's shoes, with a sheepskin pelisse, a prisoner's gown, and a grey cap without a visor. I was evidently to be sent off on a long journey—I guessed whither. A leather strap was attached to the middle of the shackles and put in my hand, so as to prevent the chains from trailing on the ground. They began clanking, however, as I was being led back to the exit from the bastion.

‘ Pull the leather strap and keep your chains from clanking,’ ordered the prison director.

What secrecy there is about everything in

the prison! Dragging my legs with difficulty, clad as they were in their unaccustomed garb, I entered the guard-room, and sat down between two gendarmes of gigantic stature. The director had disappeared. I sat for about an hour in this state of suspense. The gendarmes seemed greatly bored. They were continually yawning and stretching themselves. To judge from their dialect and their stature, they were Little Russians. It would be difficult to find another such pair of tall, thick-set, healthy men. The skin on their cheeks seemed to be so tightly stretched that at any moment it might burst. The prison director suddenly reappeared, accompanied by an officer of gendarmes and two jailers carrying a bundle of the clothes in which I had been arrested.

The bundle was undone, and the clothes handed over to the gendarmes, each piece being verified according to the list.

As he was counting the money in my purse, the director suddenly noticed a small paper packet. He carefully opened it. It contained a powder of a darkish colour.

‘What is this?’ he asked me significantly.

I was at first surprised to see this packet in my purse, but suddenly remembered that I often carried with me two or three powders of *Kali hypermanganicum* to clean my teeth.

‘Oh, I think it must be a powder of manganese of potassium,’ I replied ; and, wishing to convince him, I wetted my finger and put it in the powder, to see whether it would produce the characteristic colour. But the director hastily seized my finger and began to wipe it carefully. He evidently suspected poison.

III

IN SCHLUESSELBURG

‘Jesus Christ did not protest when He was carried off and His face struck. The mere thought of it even is a profanation of His pure personality and mild greatness.’

V. N. FIGNER.

I WAS led to the gate, where a carriage was awaiting us. The officer sat down by my side, the two gendarmes opposite. As far as I could guess, it was about four o’clock. It was dark, and the blinds were down.

My brain was still busy, trying to guess where I was going. It was not worth while asking my companions ; they would not have answered.

Two or three minutes had scarcely elapsed when the carriage suddenly stopped. Why so soon ? The two giants jumped out, and, paying their respects to a General who was expecting us, seized me under the arms. A cold, damp air was wafted against my face.

‘The Neva,’ I guessed in the darkness. ‘What ! Are they taking me to the Schluesselburg fortress ?’ My soul froze within me. What I had most dreaded was going to happen.

A small Government steamer (the *Moyka* or the *Fontanka*, or another of that kind) was waiting at the landing-place of the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. I knew the spot, having often visited it. The blockheads of gendarmes literally dragged me over the landing-place and along the steamer until we reached the cabin at the stern.

The iron rings of my fetters had eaten themselves into my flesh, causing me grievous pain, and I hastened to sit down on the sofa.

In the hurry of taking me away, they had omitted to put on me the fetter protectors, which are made of skin and protect the leg from the rubbing of the iron. This fact, too, was a sure sign that my journey was not to be a long one. But why put us in thick irons at all? I tried to stretch my leg, and the ring of the chain fell down on my ankle. It struck me that only a slight effort was required to take the chain off altogether, and the presence of the gendarmes alone prevented me from trying to do so. The torment caused by putting on the chains was, therefore, only a matter of form, serving no purpose whatever in a case of emergency. The officer of gendarmes, a Captain by rank, now came down into the cabin, and the steamer at once put off. I looked through the porthole. The town was still asleep. Some-

where in the distance there were lamps still alight. I had no longer any doubts about my destination. They were taking me to Schlues-selburg.

This was indeed unjust. My soul cried out in its indignation. The General had informed me that the Emperor had graciously commuted my sentence to that of penal servitude, and now they were going to take me into solitary confinement. They ought to have asked my consent. They had no right to act without it. The gendarmes brought down a samovar and tea-service, rolls and butter.

‘Please eat,’ the officer invited me.

‘Where are you taking me?’ I asked. ‘To Schluesselburg?’

The Captain spread out his hands and shrugged his shoulders, indicating by this gesture that he could say nothing. But at tea he very minutely spoke of himself and of his sympathies. He laid stress upon the fact that he was a genuine Russian, a man of Moscow, who loved everything that came from that town to such a degree that he even ordered his rolls from Moscow. He hated the new northern capital.

‘Then why are you staying in St. Petersburg?’

‘Moscow is the place to live in, and St. Petersburg to serve in,’ he replied. ‘There is more

order kept there, and people are not so negligent about their duties as in Moscow.'

As he absented himself several times, and also gave various orders to the gendarmes, I understood that more prisoners, destined for detention in Schluesselburg, were in the fore-cabin.

The day dawned. The weather was damp. Through the dim window I could see the banks of the Neva. Only a year ago I had been enjoying myself in a villa on the 'Islands.'

We passed the old oak of Peter the Great, and I knew that Schluesselburg was near. Again the forest was seen stretching on both sides of the Neva. The church of the cemetery on the Preobraghensky hill came in sight. A little lower there was a large factory, and behind it the town. The fortress was on the island in front, but I could not see it through the cabin window. The engine stopped, and the steamer approached the landing-place. I had scarcely shown my head above the cabin stairs through the hatchway when the gendarmes seized me and pulled me on deck. I caught sight of a naval officer and sailors. From the steamer I was quickly dragged on shore, where a group of gendarmes and officers were standing. My feet scarcely touched the ground. I was hauled further along the high wall of the fortress until we reached the gate of the tower known as the Imperial. All

this while my chains were hanging, and the iron rings cutting with their sharp edges into my flesh. The pain was almost unbearable. I was incapable of thinking either of the interior of the fortress, of the church and the tomb, or of the officers' quarters.

The gendarmes, evidently realizing how I suffered, accelerated their pace, and began almost running. Why all this haste? In order to unload the steamer as quickly as possible and leave the officers at leisure? We entered the iron gates of the prison, which was surrounded by a red stone wall, and I was put down on my legs.

Thank God! I hardly think I could have stood another minute of such severe torture.

The jailers now quickly approached, and began to break away the bolts of my shackles with a pointed tool—a new torture. The heavy strokes of the hammer made my whole body quiver with pain. One of the officers, noticing the expression of agony on my face at every blow, ordered one of the gendarmes to hold the ring with his hands. I felt an immediate and immense relief. The relief was even greater when the iron chains fell off my feet. The joy at feeling free of them even drowned, for a moment, the bitter consciousness that I was entering a living tomb for an indefinite period of time.

Passing the guard-room, we entered that part of the prison which had only recently been constructed, and had just been inaugurated by receiving the first transport of prisoners from the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul (August 3, 1884). On entering the prison one is struck by the peculiar construction of its interior. Both stories of the building contain about forty cells, the doors of which all lead into one common space in the middle of the building, as into one high hall, reaching from ground to roof, with windows at both ends. So wherever the jailer stands he can at once overlook all the forty cells. Along the upper story runs a narrow balcony, accessible by a winding iron staircase. In order to prevent any attempt on the part of the prisoners to throw themselves over, a closely woven net is stretched along the upper part of the railing.

I had scarcely had time to look round when I was led into one of the rooms. A group of officers and gendarmes were assembled there, evidently the Commission for the reception of prisoners.

Then my body was subjected to a disgraceful and humiliating examination. I was undressed, and the gendarmes poked their dirty fingers anywhere and everywhere—into my hair, into the secret places of the body, into my mouth. I felt horribly ashamed and hurt. What a savage,

rude, and disgusting institution ! I recall nothing more humiliating during the whole of my sojourn in various prisons.

I was surprised at the indifference with which the officers and the physician witnessed this moral torture. How could they so quietly look on at such a revolting offence to human feelings ?

This over, I was again dressed in ungainly grey trousers and a vest of the same kind with black sleeves and a black patch on the back. I thought of the girl of Dostoevsky, who expressed herself concerning the prisoner's garb in the following words : ' Ouf ! how ugly ! and they seem to have run short of grey cloth, too ! ' Two gendarmes, one in front and one behind, took me to one of the cells on the upper story. Without words, they very roughly pushed me into it with their hands.

IV

THE PRISON DIRECTOR

‘It is suffocating under the low, dirty roof ;
My strength grows weaker year by year :
They oppress me, this stony floor,
This iron-chained table,
This bedstead, this chair, chained
To the walls, like boards of the grave.
In this eternal, dumb, deep silence
One can only consider oneself a corpse.’

N. A. MOROZOV.

BEFORE leaving the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, I had already decided upon the line of conduct I would adopt towards my jailers. To make violent protestations meant to engage in an unequal fight with these rough, uneducated men, and to provoke them to even crueller insults. An attitude of rebellion on the part of the prisoner, maintained with any insistence, usually led to his violent death, of which many examples existed. I decided that rather than enter upon a struggle in which I was sure to be defeated, it would be better to place myself on a height unattainable by the jailers. I made up my mind to have as little communication with them

as possible: never to ask anything of them, to enter into no conversation with them, to answer them briefly, and only when it was absolutely necessary; never to oppose or protest, to bear everything in silence, and, above all, never to complain to them. Looking back upon that time, I am convinced that such an attitude was the only means to guard myself from further humiliations and violence on the part of the gendarmes.

I was taken into cell No. 23, the fourth from the end, situated in the south-eastern corner of the building.

After the casemates of the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, the cell appeared very small. A little iron table, an iron stool chained to the wall, an iron bedstead turned up against the opposite wall and securely fastened to it, a closet, and a shell-shaped basin with a tap, constituted the entire furniture of my cell. The window, with its thick, dark glass, was almost under the very roof, so that it was scarcely possible to reach even the steeply sloping window-sill. Against the wall in one corner was a small wooden icon of the Virgin Mother, and a little lower, in a more conspicuous place, was a printed declaration from the prison director, informing the prisoner that any attempt on his part to insult the jailers would bring capital punishment in its wake. The

posting up of these printed words, the only ones the prisoner has to read in a solitary cell, showed an utter ignorance of the human soul on the part of the authorities. These printed lines, constantly before the eyes of the prisoner, gradually set his brain working without intermission on one and the same subject, so that in the end the hypnotized prisoner often threw himself either on the prison director or the prison doctor, demanding capital punishment 'in accordance with the law.' In many prisons abroad this mental process has long ago been observed, and such printed posters have been replaced by large placards containing passages from the New Testament.

The director, an elderly Captain of gendarmes, addressed me in the following words: 'I am obliged to address every prisoner with "thou"; the law ordains it. Please, therefore, not to feel offended when I say "thou." And thus, dost thou wish to eat?'

I cast a glance at the director's Hebrew type of face, read in it his past, his list of services, and at once understood everything. And to understand everything, people say, means to forgive everything.

I understood that before me, upright as if on duty, stood a soldier in an officer's uniform. He looked fifty years old. To judge from the

St. George's Cross on his breast, he had been to the wars. He had perhaps subdued the Poles in the insurrection of 1863. He had evidently afterwards been incorporated in the regiment of gendarmes, had shown his zeal and ardour in service, obeying the commands of his superiors to the letter, never deviating to the right or to the left. No doubt he was often ordered to make many arrests, risking his own life, in acknowledgment of which he had been raised to the rank of officer and appointed director of a political prison. He most probably still continued to execute all the orders of the authorities as minutely and as faithfully as before. The authorities relied on him as on a stone wall; they had faith in his incorruptibility, and in recompense for his services had created him Captain.

Could I feel offended by such a man? Full of the consciousness of performing his duty, he was, in his own mind, trying his very best to deserve the attention of his superiors. What were the prisoners to him?—Mere pieces of wood, without voices, without feelings, and without wishes. Like the centurion in the Gospel, he could boast: 'I have only to command a prisoner to go, and he will go; to stand still, and he will stand still; to undress, and he will undress; to lie down, and he will lie down. What I command the prisoner must do. Like convicts

in penal servitude, they are deprived of all rights. If I usually address my subalterns with "thou," surely my tongue would disobey me if I even *wished* to say "you" to my prisoners!

And how much mischief has this 'thou' caused within the walls of Schluesselburg prison!

It was a gross mistake on the part of the Government to appoint an uneducated soldier-gendarme to be the official guardian of a group of 'intellectuals,' many of them endowed with fiery natures, and with nerves shattered by the abnormal conditions of their life. Could one expect a soldier like this, intent on obeying the commands of the law to the letter, to understand the psychological state of his prisoners, or to make a study of their particular idiosyncrasies? And there was as much variety in their characters as in those of human beings outside a prison wall. Moreover, it was impossible to apply a strict discipline in the case of people who were ready to sacrifice their lives for the idea of deliverance from oppression of every kind.

The Government, however, seems to have at last understood its mistake, as four years later it removed this ideally obedient servant. It is easy to dismiss a prison director and appoint another in his place, but, unfortunately, the prisoners who have perished under his rule can never be brought to life again.

V

NEIGHBOURS IN SUFFERING

‘Whoever you are, my sad neighbour,
I love you as a friend of my youth,
Though only my incidental colleague,
Though by the play of cruel fate
We are for ever separated from each other
By a wall now and by mystery later.’

LERMONTOV.

I WAS left alone in my cell. The heavy oaken, iron-lined door was shut noisily upon me. The lock snapped. The small cell, 5 feet long and 4 feet wide, suddenly appeared smaller and narrower still.

In the door there was the well-known aperture or casement window, which could be shut, and through which the food was handed in, and above it the ‘eyehole,’ as large as a two-copeck piece, through which the prisoner could be constantly watched.

It was a new place, yet it seemed old and familiar to me. There were the same ceiling, the same cold floor, the same walls. The only difference consisted in the changed condition under

which I now found myself. In the prison of St. Peter and St. Paul, before my trial, I had received a few rare visits from my relatives, and could hope that I would soon leave my cell and again look upon God's world—the green fields, forests, and waters—whilst now, isolated as I was from the whole world, there was nothing left to me but the prospect of being buried alive for a few years—‘to abandon everything and forget everything.’

Outside my door heavy steps resounded on the stone floor. The gendarmes who had brought me were evidently leaving the place. The exit was through an iron door, composed of a massive grating, as I had just noticed when I entered the prison. It fell back with a loud noise. They were gone. Everything became suddenly silent. There it was again, the terrible silence of the tomb.

I sat down on the iron footstool chained to the wall, and began to listen for any noises that might come from the outside. No sound penetrated through the window with its double frames, and where, indeed, should any sounds come from, considering that in front of the prison ran an immensely high, thick wall, behind which only the ‘sea roared’? All I could hear from time to time on the farther side of the door was the faint noise of the squeaking of the jailer's boots as he

stealthily approached my cell. I began to watch the hole in the door, through which the eye of the jailer was continually reappearing.

And here was again a remarkable combination. Although I was in this close confinement, passing the days in unbroken and painful solitude, yet I was never left to myself. I could do absolutely nothing without a witness ; I was all the time in the company of an unknown gendarme, whose watchful eye was constantly tormenting and haunting me. I had to behave, consequently, as the whole world were watching me. I resolved, if therefore, to follow out a programme of conduct which was novel to me—to act in such a manner that I should have no occasion to blush for my transgressions before anyone. Living in society, one is often obliged to make compromises with one's conscience ; but here, in solitary confinement, there was no necessity to adapt oneself to the requirements of social life and to the character of other people ; reason and feeling could therefore act freely.

I rose with the intention of walking about, when I suddenly heard a stealthy knock coming from the next cell, whilst at the same time the eye of the jailer appeared in the aperture of the door.

‘Here is a new trial,’ I thought. The director of the prison had informed me that it was strictly

forbidden to communicate with my neighbours by means of knocks, and that the prisoners caught in the act of knocking were punished severely : and now I was called upon to answer. What was I to do ?—Deceive the jailer, and answer my neighbour stealthily ? But I had just made up my mind to act in such a manner that I should not have to blush for my transgressions. Should I humiliate myself on account of these soldiers, and lower myself to deceit and shamming ? In my first prison I had in the beginning communicated with my neighbour by means of knocks, but I finally abandoned such a method of intercourse. I remember it happened thus : My right-hand neighbour called me, employing a very primitive way of conveying his words. He expressed the letter *a* by one knock, *b* by two knocks, the thirtieth letter by thirty knocks, and so on.* Such a method was sufficient to make a nervous individual lose all desire to enter into conversation. But we nevertheless did manage to communicate with one another. I soon learned that my right-hand neighbour was a young man quite unknown to me, but he was greatly interested in my left-hand neighbour, and the two made me their go-between. During our conversations the jailer often penetrated into my cell, made insulting observations, and uttered various threats.

* The Russian alphabet has thirty-five letters.

To avoid all this, I had to knock at the walls in a stealthy manner, like a thief, watching for the moment when the jailer was not near my door, and the moment the noise of his stealthily approaching step was heard rush away from the wall and start walking up and down the cell, putting on an innocent expression of face. Such manœuvres were for me the source of an indescribable moral torture. It was intensified by my right-hand neighbour. He never asked a simple question, but prefaced it with introductory words, as, for instance: 'Will you be so good?' and, 'Kindly ask your neighbour,' etc. I used to wait and wait until he had finished his polite preludes, whilst he, as if purposely, was introducing letters of twenty or thirty knocks.* 'Excuse me, please, I shall trouble you again to ask your neighbour,' etc., he would say.

My patience often gave way, and all the while I was being tormented by the jailer's eye and his stealthy footsteps. It is true, my left-hand neighbour did not worry me with such long phrases. On the contrary, he taught me a simpler, commonly adopted system of communication; but he had a remarkable gift of constantly communicating the most incredible and

* *I.e.*, words containing such letters as 'ou' and 'ye'—the twentieth and thirtieth letters of the Russian alphabet.

horrifying news, and thus not a little helped to shatter my nerves. After such an experience, I had no intention whatever of conversing by means of knocks with my neighbours for my own benefit. But perhaps my neighbour stood in need of it? He was perhaps suffering from his solitary confinement, and yearning to hear at least two or three words from a human being. Should I not help a sufferer who was perhaps on the verge of madness? Did not the young man who had troubled me with his long phrases go mad only three weeks later? I meditated long over the matter, uncertain how to settle the question. To quarrel with the jailers, to deceive them, to lie and sham, was so degrading to me, and such a burden upon my conscience! 'No,' I said; 'I shall wait a little longer before I answer my neighbour, and see how necessary I am to him.'

My neighbour, however, did not insist. I soon heard him knocking against the wall of another cell.

VI

THE FIRST DAY IN THE NEW CELL

‘Naked walls, prison thoughts,
How dark and sad you are !
How heavy to lie a prisoner inactive,
And dream of years of freedom !’

N. A. MOROZOV.

AND thus I voluntarily condemned myself to unalleviated solitude. I hoped, however, that here, too, books, my faithful friends, would appear.

‘I shall wait a few days,’ I thought, ‘and if the prison director does not think of it himself, then I shall ask him to lend me a book. Oh, how hard it is to ask for anything here !’

I shall never forget how, in the first prison, I had to ask several times for some book, until at last, with a jesuitic smile, I was given a soiled copy of the New Testament, and for some time afterwards my jailers curiously watched me through the eyehole to see what impression this dirty little book, many pages of which were missing, would produce upon me.

After many rebuffs, I at last decided to ask, as far as possible, for nothing—to suffer in silence,

to wait, and never complain. Whether I felt cold or suffered hunger, or the soles of my boots were trodden out, I remained silent. Such an attitude on my part soon proved to be the best I could have adopted towards my insolent jailers. They became more attentive, even polite, and found out for themselves what I needed. At first they used to find fault with me for the merest trifles. If they noticed, for instance, the slightest scratch on the whitewashed wall—one which they themselves had perhaps casually made—I was immediately overwhelmed with questions and remarks of the most insulting character.

In the new prison, however, a new order of things existed. Here the director kept the prison keys in his own possession. Whenever tea, dinner, or supper was distributed, whenever a medical inspection took place, or the prisoners were taken out for a walk or led to the baths—in every instance the director always opened and locked the doors himself, and the soldiers accompanying him, being under the eye of their officer, were thus prevented from overstepping the bounds of humanity. Some prisoners chose a different line of conduct towards their jailers. They set themselves in determined opposition to them, contradicted them, demanded and insisted upon things, and, at the same time, endeavoured to shield themselves by all possible

means against insults and impertinences. This often led to encounters exceedingly humiliating for the prisoners. It is possible that, by behaving in this way, the prisoners helped to break the monotony of their lives : it enabled them to play a part in a small drama, and thus gave them a sense of still fighting—*i.e.*, of still living, and not being morally dead. But personally I preferred to look on in silence upon all these prison trifles, bearing them magnanimously with all the physical and moral powers at my disposal. I preferred to arm myself, Christ-like, with a divine silence and an imperturbable patience. It is true that it was somewhat difficult at first to play the magnanimous towards the jailers, but I was rewarded by the comparative peace and tranquillity of soul which I afterwards enjoyed.

I passed the first day in walking to and fro across my cell, reflecting upon the limits of human thought. It is remarkable that the numerous recent impressions produced upon me by my trial, which lasted a week, by the interviews with my relatives, and my transfer from one prison to another, seemed as if suddenly wiped out. I did not even care to try and recall them, whilst my brain was ready to occupy itself with absolutely abstract subjects. Eighteen months had passed since I had been torn away from my family and friends. At first I had been

able to think of nothing but them. Gradually, however, it seemed as if they had passed into some Nirvana, and a fog of forgetfulness appeared to envelop all my previous life. The more I freed myself from reminiscences, the more my intellect thirsted for new ideas. Never in my life, neither before nor after my confinement, have I noticed in myself such a faculty for reflection as while in prison. It is very possible that brain and heart work the more intensely the less occupation the body finds. In any case, I am compelled to admit that in solitary confinement the intellect seems to free itself from its shackles.

I had been taught in my childhood that one of the characteristics of the animal is its ability to migrate from one place to another. I was now deprived of this freedom. In this sense I was no animal—or, at least, to a very limited degree—my opportunities for migration being confined to a space of 20 square arsheen.* But if, on the one hand, the prisoner is deprived of the freedom of movement and space, on the other he has time at his disposal. But what is the use of time in prison? Would it not be better to forget its existence, to be unconscious of it? Unfortunately, however, the prisoner is not allowed to forget it. As if of set purpose to

* A measure of length, an ell, a yard; 1 arsheen = 2 feet 4.242 inches.

remind him of it, every hour, every half-hour, and even every quarter of an hour, makes itself intrusively known either by the striking of the clocks or the changing of the sentries. People are accustomed to measure time in various ways, but the unfortunate prisoner measures it chiefly by the stages of his suffering. He does not pass his time in prison : he *suffers* his time, just as people suffer something disagreeable, something tedious and heavy.

Bedtime came. The soldiers hastily entered my cell, unfastened the bedstead, and pulled it from the wall. It was already made up for the night, and I hastened to get into it. . . . I do not know whether it was the light of the lamp, or whether my nerves had been overwrought by my transfer from one prison to another, or whether I was experiencing the truth of the dictum that one does not sleep in a new place—in any case, I could find no sleep for some time. I listened involuntarily for the stealthy approach of the sentry, and watched for his eye at the hole. I soon, however, grew tired of that, and, shutting my eyes, I began, in the hope of fatiguing my brain, to count how many days and hours I had passed since the moment of my arrest. At last I fell into a doze. ‘A-a-a-ah!’ A loud, prolonged cry of horror resounded through the prison. My hair stood on end ; I trembled

as if shaken by fever. The cry was succeeded by an oppressive silence. Even the sound of the sentry's step had ceased. Evidently one of the prisoners had been suffering from nightmare, I had often heard similar cries in my first prison, but never did they echo so loudly and hideously as here.

I wrapt myself still closer in my bed-clothes, but could find no rest. Sleep had gone from me entirely. The cry continued to ring in my ears, conjuring up before my mind's eye pictures, one more terrible than the other.

The little board covering the aperture in the door of my cell again moved, and the eye of the sentry reappeared, and so it went on at regular intervals all through the night.

How unbearable it all was !

All at once comes a loud sound of footsteps on the stone floor of the corridor. 'It must be the change of sentries,' I think. Suddenly the door of a distant cell is heard to open. What can it be ? Is it the prison director arrived ? Why should he visit the cells at this hour of the night ? I listen attentively. Yes, it is he making the round of the cells. He comes to mine. He opens the eyehole and looks in. He passes on, and at the next cell he makes an observation to the prisoner. Yes, it is the voice of the prison director.

I must admit he was a most faithful servant. All day long he had been on his legs, and now, in the middle of the night, he again made his rounds.

Another hour passed before I could fall asleep. It was no sleep, however, but rather a long line of dreams, interrupted by frequent awakenings.

Some one in the distance was now crying hysterically. At first the sounds were muffled (the sufferer was evidently endeavouring to suppress his cries), but gradually they became louder and louder, and at last the poor man could not restrain himself any longer, and wept aloud in all the strength of his grief and suffering. My own heart was so wrung with pain that I was ready to burst into tears myself. Oh, how sad it was! Would no one come to soothe the unhappy sufferer? I rose with the intention of helping him, but was soon tossing helplessly again on my bed. I hid my head under the bed-clothes, but failed to shut out the sound of the cries.

An hour or two passed, and the cries not only did not cease, but increased in vigour. They were hysterical cries of an absolutely feminine character.

How long would this last?

I tossed about in agony until the dawn, when at last I had an interval of rest.

VII

DESPAIR

‘ Everything here is so silent, lifeless, pale ;
The years pass fruitless, leaving no trace ;
The weeks and days drag on heavily,
Bringing only dull boredom in their suite.’

N. A. MOROZOV.

LOUD knocks at the doors of the cells awoke me. It was day. Scarcely had I risen, and put on the grey trousers and the grey gown, when the soldiers entered my cell, fastened up my bedstead, and, putting a piece of bread on my table, left as quickly as they had entered.

Exhausted by sleeplessness and the horrors of the night, I had no inclination to eat, and sadly sat down on the footstool. I was no longer in yesterday's state of mind, and the desire to reflect on abstract matters had passed away. My head was aching as from charcoal fumes. I longed to lie down again and go to sleep, but my bedstead was put back. What was I to do ?

A feeling of mental weakness and despair crept over me. I could resist no longer, and, laying my head on my hands, I burst into tears.

As I did not wish the sentry to be a witness of my tears, I squeezed myself into the corner near the door.

A loud knock at the door called me out. The sentry wished to draw my attention to the fact that I must not hide, but remain all the time visible to him.

‘What strange people!’ I thought to myself. ‘They guard the prisoner, fearing that he may lay hands on himself. But who needs his life, after he has been crossed off the list of the living?’

In order to give no opportunity to the prisoner to commit suicide, the prison authorities allowed him neither knife nor scissors. After the bath his nails were cut by the soldiers, whilst meat for dinner was cut into small pieces before it was distributed.

I had no intention whatever of attempting suicide, but I should have welcomed a natural death, especially at such a moment as I have described, when the sentry would not even allow me to stand in the corner of my cell.

And, as if on purpose to annoy me, he looked into my cell that morning as often as possible. To my relief, I at last again heard the noise of doors opening and shutting. The prison director was once more making his round. For what purpose? My turn came. The director

entered, accompanied by soldiers and the prison doctor.

‘How is your health?’ asked the latter.

I wanted to tell him of my state of health, of my sleepless night, and of the helpless cries of prisoners which disturbed my rest, but, casting a glance at the prison director and the soldiers, I suddenly checked myself and briefly replied :

‘I am all right.’

The doctor left.

I had a vivid remembrance of my first night in my first prison, where, the following morning, feeling exhausted, I asked the doctor, a respectable-looking, elderly gentleman, to help me. By way of a reply he asked me :

‘Since when have you been here?’

‘Since yesterday.’

‘Yesterday? Ah, then it is natural. One always feels like that during the first few days. Wait another three or four days, and you will feel better.’

He turned from me and went. At that moment I vowed to myself never again to ask anything from the prison doctor.

This one, too, would undoubtedly have consoled me with the hopeful prospect of three days, or perhaps, this time, of a week. God be with them !

The doctor had scarcely finished the round of

the cell, when the same sound of doors and steps were repeated. Suddenly the director walked into my cell and proposed to me to go out for a walk. I put on my grey cap without a visor, with a large black cross on the crown, and, with a feeling of curiosity, left my cell. A soldier went in front of me and another followed behind, whilst the director himself brought up the rear of our procession. Turning round the prison building, we arrived at a wooden watch-tower, full of soldiers. Underneath were a few doors side by side. One of these doors was opened, and I was led into a narrow cage of about 3 or 4 sazhen* in length, surrounded by a high wooden wall; under my feet was the naked sand and above me the grey, sad sky and the watch-tower with soldiers.

After a while another prisoner was led into the next cage, and so on, one by one. Separated from each other by impenetrable walls, we walked about in our cages in silence. There was not a sign of anything green under my feet. I bent down and lifted up a little white stone, not larger than a pea, when a soldier abruptly entered my cage, and rudely ordered me to hand him over the object I had just picked up. I obeyed. With a look of disappointment at the little stone, he threw it away.

* A measure of length equal to 1.167 English fathoms, or about 7 English feet.

‘You are not allowed to do anything; you must neither pick up nor take anything into your hands,’ he observed severely.

I cannot say that under such circumstances the walk was a pleasant one. Anyhow, the pleasure did not last long, for at the end of a quarter of an hour the director led me back to my cell, escorted, as before, by two soldiers.

Great Heavens! What a killing smell there was in the cell after the fresh open air! How was it possible to live in such a horrible atmosphere?

As if in reply to my question came the sound of the shutting of doors.

How tedious, empty, and heavy this life was, morally and physically!

What an aimless existence! Oh, let me yet breathe awhile in the world!

‘It is too early yet for me to die.’ I remembered the words from ‘The Prisoner,’ by Zhukovsky.

After walking about for a while in my cell, I sat down on the footstool, placed my hands on the table, laid my head on my hands, and remained thus until dinner-time arrived, which was announced by the opening of the little flaps in the doors. When the prison director opened one with his key, it fell back with a noise, thus forming a small table, about 7 vershok long and 4 wide. On it was placed a tin basin full

of sour-cabbage soup, covered with a plate of *kasha*. I took my food and carried it to my iron table. Lovers of hot food had to eat their prison dinner very hastily ; the metal dishes and the iron table made it grow cold very quickly. The *kasha* had, under any circumstances, to be eaten cold. When first in prison, I paid particular attention to my food. I used to analyse it, taste it, make guesses as to the manner in which it had been prepared, think about more tasty things. I looked forward to my dinner with particular interest. I found later on that I was not the only prisoner who had made a study of his food. I had occasion afterwards to question other prisoners who had been in solitary confinement, and learned from them that it was the case with all novices. By degrees one grows callous, and eats the dinner mechanically, unconsciously. I must also add that we were not given provender of the kind to make us eat it with special zeal. On the first day of my arrest, I remember, I did not dine at all. For my supper I was given a basin full of absolutely watery soup. Having tasted it, I burst into tears. A prophetic observation of the staff officer on duty, when we cadets used to throw bread balls at one another at table, came to my mind.

‘Gentlemen,’ he said, ‘be more attentive and respectful to your food, especially to your bread.

Heaven knows whether you may not one day find yourselves in a position which will teach you the full value of a piece of bread.'

To my own surprise, I soon grew accustomed to the *kasha*, as well as to the soup, whilst the black bread given us for breakfast tasted more delicious than the sugar-rolls which I used to eat when I was free. It needed a great effort of will-power on my part not to eat my entire daily ration of bread, about one pound and a half, when first brought me in the morning, and so leave none of it for dinner.

How relative everything is in the world ! This is a lesson that we learn best in prison.

Having finished my dinner, I had now got through the first half-day. I had to live through the second half, to pass it somehow. My headache was nearly gone, but my general feeling was one of heaviness. I felt no inclination to do or think of anything. There was nothing to look at, either. If I had had a book, I should have liked to read. I should have to ask the director for it, I thought ; he does not seem to think of it himself. But I was wrong. About three hours after dinner the director, unlocking the aperture in my door, handed me a book, an illustrated History of Art by Lübke. I was overcome with delight ; and, as if wishing to overwhelm me with his attentions, he also brought me a Bible, printed

by the Lay Press, and a small Prayer Book with a calendar. What riches all at once ! In prison one learns how to value things. In my joy I forgot my headache and the sentry with his watchful eye, and, methinks, even the very prison.

VIII

FAILING EYESIGHT

‘ Our thoughts grow dull from long confinement ;
There is a feeling of heaviness in our bones ;
The minutes seem eternal from torturing pain,
In this cell, four steps wide.’

N. A. MOROZOV.

THE gloomy autumn days passed, winter followed, the monotonous life within four walls being only interrupted by the receipt of books from the prison library. But they soon became valueless to me, my cell being almost in darkness, as the small window with the dull panes, at a distance of 5 arsheen from my table, lent only a feeble light. After three months of solitary confinement, my eyes as I was reading began to be suddenly obscured at intervals by dark patches, and if I strained my eyesight ever so little I seemed to see golden sparks—a thing which had never happened to me before. Not to be able to read a book when its pages are lying open before one is an agony as great as any that tormented Tantalus. Literally suffering ‘ spiritual thirst,’ I implored Heaven to send me a healing light.

Heaven evidently listened to my prayer, for I conceived the idea of bathing my eyes in cold water. Daily, therefore, mornings and evenings, I filled my washing basin with cold water, and, plunging my head into it, kept it there for ten or twenty minutes. The result was unexpected. My eyesight was soon so strengthened that I could read even the smallest print in my half-dark cell. The care for my physical health I carried farther. I made it an invariable rule to go through certain exercises before sitting down to my meals. I waved my arms and legs, bent and twisted my body, sat down, and even ran about from corner to corner, gathering up the skirts of my prison gown. I imagine that my bent figure, thus clad, must have offered at once a pitiful and a ridiculous spectacle. In course of time prison life makes one grow inert and slow. The extremely limited space and the absence of any necessity for hurry are the chief causes of this deterioration, and, one may add, the natural desire which gradually arises to prolong every action so as to make the time appear shorter.

In order to have more movement, I decided to wash the stone floor of my cell every morning. But how? As soon as I heard the first sounds of the opening and shutting of doors, I seized the rag which used to be given to the prisoners



VERA NICOLAEVNA FIGNER

to preserve cleanliness in their cells, and hastened through the task before the director had reached my door. The time at my disposal being very short, my pulse began to beat faster, and I felt a little more life in me.

The prisoners constantly complained of the lack of manual labour in the open air. After repeated requests, heaps of sand were thrown into the several cages where we used to pass our recreation-time, and we were told to transfer it with a wooden spade from one corner to another. At first I energetically occupied myself with this useless task, but at last I grew tired of this Sisyphean labour, and found it more amusing to trace relief maps of well-known localities in the sand. This occupation was not unlike a childish game, but it could not be any longer looked upon as physical labour.

In spite of the care I took about my health, I nevertheless grew very feeble and thin. When, after a time, permission was granted to me to have a slate, and, dipping it in water, I used it as a mirror, a terribly emaciated and entirely bloodless face of a greyish colour stared back at me. How, indeed, was it possible to keep a healthier colour considering that one was constantly living inside a lavatory? How else can I designate this casement, where the dirty iron pail placed in a wooden box remained for

twenty-four hours, poisoning the already vitiated and unbearable atmosphere? Matters were slightly better in my present prison than they had been in the former. Here a little more civilized system had been adopted in the construction of these boxes. In any case, however, they were wholly unfit to be left standing in a small living-room.

The basin with sour-cabbage soup being the heaviest thing which I had to lift in the course of twenty-four hours, my muscles, for want of exercise, grew flaccid and weak. When I first met my own people, after a three years' silence in prison, my jaw-bones were almost paralysed from long disuse in speech, and in like manner my hearing had also suffered; this was noticeable at once to my relatives. Only with difficulty could I detect the words of people in the same room. As for singing, my capacity for this did not return till six months after I had left the prison. Once while in prison I tried to read a book half aloud, when the door suddenly opened and I was reprimanded for doing so.

‘I am only reading to myself,’ I observed.

‘It is all the same: you must not do it. It is audible.’

Like other prisoners, I naturally did not escape the attacks of nervous exhaustion and anæmia. There were periods when I could scarcely sit

down for five minutes without jumping up on account of the nervous spasms in my legs. I could not lie still even in bed ; I writhed about, the convulsive twitching often spreading from my legs and arms over half my body.

The heart's action had evidently grown very weak. Although I noticed no symptoms of actual illness in myself, I was subject to a terrible malady, which remained with me long after I had left the prison : I suffered from nightmare. I had no sooner fallen asleep at night than I felt as if somebody threw himself upon me, paralysing my whole body ; I could move neither hand nor foot, and although my consciousness seemed to return, I could not stir nor open an eye, and thus I remained, for I cannot tell how long, as if fettered. At last, after a desperate struggle, with a violent effort, I awoke thoroughly, horribly frightened and breathing heavily. During the nightmare my heart used to beat violently, though ordinarily I never suffered from palpitations, and even after my release medical authorities told me that my heart was quite sound. Strange to say, half an hour or an hour later I used to fall asleep comparatively quietly.

I grew to feel a dread of these nightmares, as of some impending evil. I would be longing to sleep, would undress, and then be afraid to lie down ; and often, in the anticipation of the

inevitable, I used to weep in my helplessness. Sometimes, as soon as the nightmare began, I awoke at once, quite self-possessed ; but this never saved me from a second attack. And thus, during the time I remained in solitary confinement, I hardly ever fell asleep without at first going through this interval of torture. Nothing told upon me more than this fruitless struggle with nightmare, and, in fact, it left its mark on my face. I never, however, cried out like that prisoner who had so frightened me on the first night. He continued to suffer from his hideous dreams and to shriek aloud, but I never grew accustomed to hearing his soul-piercing cries.

We suffered terribly from want of fresh air. In winter the little windows were kept shut, and were only occasionally opened for ten or fifteen minutes whilst we were outside for recreation.

IX

THE PHANTOM OF INSANITY

‘ Entirely for our fellow-men we must live,
Our entire selves for them we must give,
And for their sakes struggle against ill fate.’

N. A. MOROZOV.

Nor long before my arrest I happened to talk to a medical practitioner concerning solitary confinement. He categorically declared that after three months of solitary confinement a man was bound to lose his reason. He was wrong. It is true that, although I have known prisoners who lost their reason in even less than three months, I have more often come across those who had remained five and ten years in solitary confinement and yet continued to enjoy to the full all their reasoning faculties.

In any case, the doctor’s words engendered within me the fear of losing my reason. I decided to struggle against this evil, and from the very first day endeavoured to control my intellect by a strict discipline—by not allowing it, for any length of time, to remain idle. I

used, therefore, mentally to deliver lectures to imaginary audiences on my favourite subjects, such as mathematics, physics, and astronomy. I made verses, French and English translations, occupied myself with classical languages, etc. Considering that I only knew a few Greek words incorporated in the Russian language, the manner in which I studied Greek in prison, without books or teacher, will sound somewhat curious. And yet this study became one of my most agreeable occupations, awaking my love for philological research. I used, for instance, to take a compound Greek word, the meaning of which was known to me, like *epitrachil* (stole), and endeavour to find out its literal translation. ‘What is the meaning of *epi*?’ I asked myself. I knew the words *epigraphy*, *epitaphy*, *episcop* (bishop). From this list of words I arrived at the conclusion that *epi* meant *on*. Further, what is the meaning of *trachil*? In my memory there was another word with a similar root, *tracheotomy*, meaning ‘cutting of the throat.’ Now, it was clear *epitrachil* meant the object which the priest put on his neck. I had thus analysed one word; but there was now another to be analysed — *tracheotomy*. *Tome* meant book, volume; *atom*, indivisible; the root *tom* therefore meant ‘to divide, to cut.’ In similar manner, slowly walking across my cell, I analysed many Greek

words. But the most grateful task was that of analysing proper names. The word Evangeline (good tidings) served me as a key. Thanks to this word, the mysteries of Eugene, Eugraph, Eusebius, Eudocimus, and many other names, became clear to me.

On my obtaining permission to have books, a number of classics were given to me. I threw myself upon the Greek grammar with avidity, literally devouring its pages.

Sometimes when the director opened my door, briefly inviting me to go out for a walk, I used to reply: 'I am so busy.' But, noticing his smile, I laughed myself.

In prison—and busy !

I thought of the young students in colleges : how surprised they would be at the attention I paid to the various *aorists*, *metathesis*, and *prolepsis*. Never did student open his Greek book with such a feeling of delight as I did in prison. It is remarkable that the very objects which ordinarily cause us boredom and impatience are, in prison, the cause of an inexplicable happiness and of a sincere childish joy. Once, during my solitary confinement, the prison librarian sent me an Algebra by Bertrand. I selected the most difficult problems, and my ecstasy knew no bounds when I succeeded in solving them with ease, and quite sincerely I

naïvely exclaimed : ‘ I wonder whether there are any mathematics in the heavenly kingdom ?’

‘ But why,’ I thought, ‘ should so much intellectual labour and energy be lost ? Why should we not be asked to translate books for print ? Why not occupy us with statistical and astronomical problems ? Why not make use of the work and capacities of the prisoners ? There is a vast difference between work done simply for the sake of passing the time and that accomplished in the consciousness that it will not be lost, but made use of for the public benefit. Not only should our labour be utilized, but also our talents developed. Time, they say, is the best genius. I am convinced that if every prisoner were provided, according to his wish and inclination, with a musical instrument, colours, clay, or a pen, musicians, painters, sculptors, and authors would develop among them. One cannot go very far with a slate. How beautiful, how wonderful the remarks I have inscribed on it ! To-morrow I must wipe everything out, making room for new notes. And thus the work of many days is consigned to Lethe.’

In former years I had often had occasion to teach adults, but I did not consider teaching my speciality. In solitary confinement scarcely a day passed that I did not mentally exercise myself in imparting instruction to imaginary

pupils. In my endeavour to explain my lessons as fully and as lucidly as possible to the four walls, I derived much benefit for myself. Ex-patiating on my subject, I was often confronted with new questions, and in solving them arrived at unexpected conclusions.

Thus nourishing my intellect, I was not, however, forgetful of the duty I owed to my feelings. In a scarcely audible whisper I used to sing arias from some well-known opera, at the same time imagining various stage decorations. These imaginary operas I greatly enjoyed, and some of them, such as 'The Huguenots,' often brought tears to my eyes.

But whatever I did, whether I was mentally reading lectures or singing favourite arias, I was all the time like a pendulum, going from one corner of my cell to the other, accelerating or moderating my step according to the state of my mind. The movement served as rhythm to my song and speech. Whenever, however, I fell into deep meditation, I literally grew frigid, remaining stock-still, afraid to stir, lest I should frighten away my thoughts. My glance, although directed towards the wall of my cell, was lost in space.

I loved those meditations. They used to come over me in the evenings before bedtime, and when a little later I was in possession of writing material, I hastened to put my thoughts down on paper.

X

A NEW FRIEND

‘In a moment of weary heaviness,
In the dark and obscure cell,
Fate gave me a friend in you,
Thus brightening my lot.’

N. A. MOROZOV.

AFTER nine months’ solitary confinement in Schluesselburg, Fate seemed to smile on me—unexpectedly sending me a friend.

The prison director, suddenly entering my cell one summer day in 1885, asked me whether I would like to pass my recreation-time in the company of a fellow-prisoner.

‘Of course I should like it.’

An inexpressible joy, not entirely free from a feeling of confusion, came over me. I feared that I had grown strange to the society of my fellow-men.

That summer a quantity of large-winged water insects (a kind of *Sialis lutaria*) had appeared. The entire prison yard was covered with them, and the red brick walls of the building, on which they had settled in large numbers, looked grey

from their innumerable wings. They were as uncountable as the locusts of the South. But the thought of an expected meeting with a fellow-creature put the consideration of this interesting phenomenon into the background. I was still in ignorance as to who my companion was to be. Being conducted to a section in the north-eastern corner of the prison yard which was divided into small cages in the shape of sectors, I was left in one of these under the supervision of the gendarmes, whilst the prison director went to fetch the other prisoner. Three or four minutes later he was brought in. As the door opened I perceived a tall, frightfully pale, and emaciated young man with a small reddish beard, clad in the same prison garb as myself—this was my colleague in confinement and general suffering.

But, heavens ! how ill he looked ! Pale with eyes from which all the light had faded, his prison gown hanging loosely on him in folds as if on a peg, the heels of his boots trodden down. Instead of raising his feet as he walked, he dragged them after him like an old man. He came forward a step or two, and then stopped, as if searching for a small space on which to stand without treading on the insects.

I looked at him in surprise. How could he, I thought, occupy himself at this moment with the insects, when before him stood a fellow-sufferer ?

But perhaps he, too, was confused, and was only awkwardly trying to hide his feelings.

‘One hardly knows where to walk without killing them ; they are everywhere.’ These were his first words.

‘Don’t trouble about them,’ I replied ; ‘this kind of animal can stand the struggle for existence much longer than others. In the present case they are even stronger than bears.’

‘How is that ?’

‘They are protected by their number. And long after all the bears in the world have been exterminated, these insects will continue to exist. But, allow me : here we are talking about these insects, when we have not yet introduced ourselves.’

We gave our names to one another. The door of the cage was left open. During the first moments of our conversation, the director and the soldiers stood watching our meeting with evident curiosity. When they had left, Nicolai Alexandrovitch—such was the name of my new acquaintance—asked me :

‘How long have you been in solitary confinement ?’

‘Three years.’

He looked into my eyes with a look of incredulity, and asked me about my occupations ; and when, ten minutes later, after an animated



NICOLAI ALEXANDROVITSH MOROZOV

conversation, we had become friends, he frankly confessed :

‘Do you know, I doubted your veracity when you told me you had been three years in solitary confinement.’

‘Why ?’

‘Because your eyes are sparkling as if you had only yesterday arrived from the country. Look at me : my eyesight is very weak—I can neither read nor write.’

I explained that I, too, could neither read nor write for some time, but that, having bathed my eyes in cold water, I had gradually strengthened my eyesight.

My new friend was Nicolai Alexandrovitch Morozov, one of the editors of the *Narodnaya Volya* (‘Popular Will’). While still a college student he had been attracted by the liberal movement, in consequence of which the young man left his family and ‘went among the people.’ He was arrested and kept for three years in solitary confinement. After the famous trial of the 193,* Nicolai Alexandrovitch was released under the condition of making his appearance every day at the police-station. Not wishing to be exiled into ‘remote localities,’ he took up an illegal position, and became one of

* 193 political prisoners accused of conspiracy against the Government.

the prominent members of the organization 'Narodnaya Volya.' He refused, however, to give his consent to all points of the programme (he did not, for instance, admit that, in order to obtain a certain purpose, where the Government is concerned, all means may be employed), and severed his connexion with the journal *Narodnaya Volya*. He then left for Geneva, where he attended lectures on mathematics and natural science. In 1881 Morozov could not resist the temptation of returning to Russia. Scarcely, however, had he passed the frontier when he was arrested by the police and taken to St. Petersburg. After a second trial he was sent to the Alexis ravelin, where he remained till 1884, when he was transferred to Schluesselburg. Before his meeting with me, Nicolai Alexandrovitch had enjoyed the privilege, during his recreation, of being with Lieutenant Boutzevitsh, for my imaginary connexion with whom I had been sentenced so heavily. Boutzevitsh had been a brilliant officer, and after passing the Naval Academy and the Institute of Engineers, he had occupied a prominent position under the Minister, Admiral Possyet. As a member of the military revolutionary organization, he was confined in a terrible prison under the supervision of rude and insolent soldiers. Grief for his family (he had only married just before his arrest)

and the damp of the casemates soon brought on consumption. He had at last become so weak—so N. A. Morozov told me—that he could only reach the recreation-cage with the support of the gendarmes. They used to lead him in and put him against the wall, in which position he remained during his interview with Morozov. At last the gendarmes thought of bringing him out a chair. Boutzevitsh did not last long. But even on the verge of the grave he never forgot his comrade, and with touching attention used to bring him the pieces of sugar which he had not been able to eat himself. When Boutzevitsh ceased coming out for recreation, his comrades guessed that he was dead. Then N. A. Morozov asked the prison director to grant him permission to meet another prisoner. The director sent his petition to the higher authorities, and they nominated me for this purpose.

We used to meet twice weekly. Each of us came to the meeting primed with a number of questions, but we scarcely ever found time enough to put them to each other. We at last adopted the following system: As soon as we met we began without delay with the questions which we had prepared beforehand. Some of them were answered at once, whilst others, the answers to which required some time, had to wait until our next meeting. And what a

number of subjects we managed to talk about in those few minutes ! To my great satisfaction, I found Morozov a man who also took a great interest in mathematics and astronomy. Whilst in prison he had conceived the idea of changing the irrational numbers into rational ones. He told me that all the unsolved problems in definite numbers could easily be solved if, instead of the ordinary unit of one dimension, we were to take the cubic unit—*i.e.*, the unit of three dimensions. And so, ‘being free’ here, as one prisoner quite seriously expressed himself, Nicolai Alexandrovitch occupied himself with many difficult solutions. To our regret, his eyesight was so weak that he could neither read nor write. Sometimes he used to bring a book with him, asking me to read the passages which were of most interest to him. And to think that he had once been a handsome, healthy, red-cheeked youth ! Nicolai Alexandrovitch nourished the intention of opening a school as soon as he should be released, and of employing his riches, strength, and capacities for the education of children. In our solitary confinement we all of us, even those who had been sentenced to many years’ imprisonment, thought a great deal about the time when we should be free again, making many plans as to our future life ; and, as far as I could see, all of us had peaceful, idyllic inclinations and a love for Nature.

XI

COURTING DEATH

‘In days of heavy trial and suffering
The universe gives us eternal advice ;
It declares to all who are afflicted :
In the name of hope, in the name of love,
Live in past and future sorrow,
But try to find happiness to-day.’

N. A. MOROZOV.

AFTER permission had been granted to the prisoners to pass their recreation-time together, they were also allowed, almost without interruption, to communicate by means of knocking. Nicolai Alexandrovitch held converse with his fellow-prisoners in this manner, and through him I learned many horrible details of the prison life. The sad story of the slow death of the prisoners within this living tomb was unfolded to me. Some of them, unable to stand it longer, lost their reason; others, unwilling to await a natural death, hastened to quit so burdensome a life. ‘The mortal hour became freedom’s call.’

Listening to Morozov’s descriptions, I had no heart to complain of my own situation, however

unbearable it appeared to me. On the contrary, I endeavoured to hide my grief and tears and moral sufferings, making an effort to appear courageous and healthy, so as to inspire him, too, with courage. But when I recall all the prison horrors, I cannot help telling every partisan of solitary confinement that he ought to remain a few hours in such a cell, with the fear before his eyes of dying in it. It is possible, of course, that, as my experiences happened some time ago, nothing similar may be found in contemporary prisons.

As far as I could observe, all the healthy individuals who had passed their lives in villages, amidst meadows and forests, grew ill very quickly, and died in prison. Urban inhabitants, whose organism had from their very childhood been accustomed to inhale vitiated air in our gigantic stone buildings, could, on the contrary, stand the confinement much longer. It was perhaps due to this fact that I, who had grown up in this capital, could remain shut up for four years in a stuffy stone box, and yet leave it alive.

Soon after the Schluesselburg prison was opened, Minakov and Myshkin were shot, whilst Klimenko, brought to the verge of despair, hanged himself on a window-hook.

It was also during my sojourn in Schluesselburg that a memorable drama was enacted—on

Christmas Day, 1884. In the evening we usually received for supper a soup made from the remains of dinner. The prison director had, on that day, made his round of the cells, and, as usual, after visiting the lower ones, he mounted the staircase to the upper cells. He came to my door; the soldiers put a tin basin of soup on my table, and left. I tasted it; it was absolutely cold and watery. A few leaves of sour-cabbage were floating on the surface.

‘They might have given us something better in honour of a festival,’ I thought. ‘But they evidently had no time to think of us, and have not even made the soup warm.’

I had scarcely formulated my thought when there came from a distant cell the noise of plates thrown on the floor, followed by shouts, angry voices, stamping of feet, and sounds of struggle, the whole noise being almost drowned by the cries and knocking at the doors by all the other prisoners.

I stood horrified. What was happening? Was it possible that it was a protest against the soup? But the tussle that followed convinced me that something more serious than food was at stake.

As it appeared later, it was Myshkin, brought here after his escape from Kara, who had broken out. It was the same Myshkin who, disguised as a gendarme, had endeavoured to get

N. G. Tshernishevsky away from Siberia. From Kara, Myshkin escaped into the Amoor district, where he managed to get on board a passenger-steamer leaving for Khabarovsk. All the Cossacks of the Amoor camps were set on his track. Myshkin had, however, in the mean time, reached Khabarovsk, making use on his way of a false passport. He took his passage, it is said, on a steamer on which was the Governor-General, and coolly discussed with the members of the latter's suite the best means of capturing the escaped criminal. He reached Vladivostock, and could easily have crossed the Russian frontier either on some Chinese or Korean junk or on a foreign steamer, because Vladivostock, being at that time a free port, had no custom-house. Myshkin, however, ignorant of the conditions of the new town, proceeded to the police-station, where he presented his passport. He was treated very amiably, and, no suspicions being aroused, he was just leaving, when some obscure little clerk suddenly insisted that an order had been received from Khabarovsk to arrest anyone with such a passport. The police officer at first grew angry, but, having convinced himself that such an order really existed, was compelled to arrest Myshkin. He was sent back to Kara, and thence to Schluesselburg. Here he could not stand the severe régime, and, throwing himself on the prison director, demanded to be executed in



MYSHKIN

accordance with the printed menace which was constantly staring him in the face from the wall. It was not long before he was put to death.

The new prison in Schluesselburg being constructed upon the most recent plans by prison experts, the Government imagined that the prisoners would find there almost a paradise. But, as the proverb runs: *Il n'y a point de belles prisons*, and, however gilded the cage, it still remains a prison for its inmates.

Formerly the prisoners were confined in the famous Alexis ravelin, in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. But when, under Alexander III., the prisoners quickly began to die one after the other, the Government decided to build the new prison in Schluesselburg. The state of affairs here was, if not worse, very little better—at least, during the first two years of its occupation. The ranks of the prisoners quickly grew thinner: some died of illness, others were put to death, many more lost their reason. It was not change of locality and of prison walls, but change of the long-established régime, which was required. Only after the horrible death of Gratshevsky were the eyes of the authorities somewhat opened, and they at last understood that it was no longer practicable to keep prisoners in such detention, and, above all, that it was a gross mistake to place a soldier in the position of director of a political prison.

XII

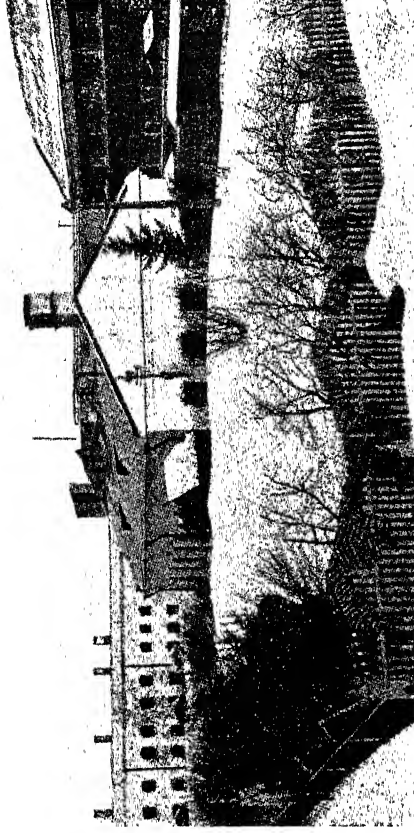
SUICIDE OF GRATSCHEVSKY

‘ Thus minutes and hours fleet,
And stronger grows the desire
That Time, with a fatal stroke of the scythe,
Would cut asunder life and suffering.’

P. S. POLIVANOV,

ALTHOUGH the death of Gratshevsky occurred after my transfer from Schluesselburg to Sakhalin, I nevertheless consider it necessary to relate it, as I have since learned particulars about it from two opposite sources.

Gratshevsky, arrested in 1882, was put in the Alexis ravelin, and transferred in August 1884 to Schluesselburg. He was witness of all the horrors of the first years of this prison. The director thought him mentally deranged. ‘ He stands in the middle of his cell declaiming, he is constantly talking in rhyme——’ Thus ran his report. Gratshevsky complained that he was disturbed by a noise in the subterranean vaults. There was, however, only a heap of coke in the cellar, and it was always kept locked. The director communicated his suspicions to the



NORTHERN PART OF THE NEW PRISON

prison doctor, a young man who was very attentive to his patients. When the doctor approached Gratshevsky, wishing, according to his habit, to apply his ear to the patient's chest, the latter gave him a heavy blow. The gendarmes at once seized Gratshevsky and dragged him back to the old prison.

The building with the forty cells for forty prisoners, the forty 'immortals' of a kind, was known as the New Prison. But crossing the prison-yard to the north, one reached another building, containing only ten cells, and known under the name of the Old Prison. In these cells were placed all those whom it was necessary to isolate from their fellow-prisoners, such as the mentally unsound, those who had been sentenced to death, or those who were on the point of leaving the prison. Here, too, Gratshevsky, considered as mentally deranged, was placed. He demanded a trial, but was refused. Fearing lest he should commit suicide or set the prison on fire, the guard about him was doubled, and his regular lamp was replaced by a little oil lamp. In case of fire, a pail with water and a sack full of sand (for the burning oil) were kept in readiness. Gratshevsky refused to be content with his new lamp, and demanded a larger lamp, so as to be able to read.

'As he had moments of lucidity,' explained the

director, 'I granted his request, and again gave him an ordinary lamp.'

In the evening of October 26, Gratshevsky began to undress. The gendarme on duty, believing that he was going to wash his body in cold water, as was his daily habit, left the cell and walked down the corridor. Suddenly a strong smell of burning reached his nostrils. He hastened to Gratshevsky's door and looked through the eye-hole. The cell was wrapt in darkness. The gendarme rang the bell of the guard-room. The director arrived and opened the door of the cell (he always carried the keys on him), which was full of stinking smoke. The gendarme was scarcely able to cross it and open the window. The unhappy Gratshevsky was lying on the floor. Under him, on the mat made of rope, the fire was still glimmering. Having extinguished it, and noticed that the prisoner was still alive, the doctor was quickly sent for. The latter, however, delayed, and before he arrived Gratshevsky had expired. Gratshevsky is supposed to have availed himself of the inattention of the gendarme on duty, and, soaking his linen in petroleum, put it on again and then set it on fire. What a horrible death! And yet, how horrible must have been the conditions of the Schluesselburg fortress if prisoners preferred to take their life in such a manner!

On the third day after the sad end of Gratshevsky a Commission of Inquiry arrived from St. Petersburg. The prison director was dismissed. What an irony of fate! As if he ever neglected his duty! Never were the keys out of his hands; with unceasing watchfulness did he walk about the prison, visit the cells, and see to the ordering of all things. How many times a day did he not have to open and relock the doors! Whenever food was distributed, or the lighted lamps handed in, or linen changed, everything took place under his personal supervision. He used to lead every prisoner personally to the recreation-ground, he remained himself in the bath-room when a prisoner was having a bath, and every week did he carefully search every prisoner. In a word, this man had devoted his entire life to the service of the prisoners, and now—he was suddenly found to be unfit. This disillusion did not remain without consequences for the director: he was shortly after seized with a paralytic stroke.

There is nothing for which we need envy the unhappy men, such as the inspector of the prison in my time, who, I hear, lost his reason, or the assistant Public Prosecutor in my trial, who went blind.

The isolation of some people from society may be a necessity, but why torture them? Might not the prisoners on this very island of Schluessel-

burg enjoy a certain independence? They should be able to choose their respective occupations, according to their various tastes—a handicraft, science, or art. They should be allowed to come together and to read newspapers. In a word, they should constitute a small colony of ‘intellectuals’ to whom some necessities of life, at least, ought to be accessible. But how is it in reality? The prison walls enclose a gigantic vault wherein human beings, half alive, still capable, however, of feeling the torture of a slow death, are heaped together.

Is it possible that the organizers of such prisons lack every atom of imagination, and are unable to conceive the sufferings of solitary confinement in all its horror? Then I would advise them to pass at least one single night in one of the Schluesselburg casemates. Let them hear the soul-rending cries of those suffering from nightmare, let them hear the hysterical weeping of helpless invalids, let them hear the desperate struggle against the violence and brutality of the soldiers. Then, perhaps, will they comprehend why some of the accused, in their last words addressed to the court, asked, as a kind of grace, for capital punishment, instead of solitary confinement.

By a strange coincidence, I had formerly made the acquaintance of a military engineer, the son

of a Lithuanian peasant, who consequently entertained ultra-democratic views. We exchanged illegal editions of books printed abroad. He himself collaborated in one or two Polish journals. And this democrat was one of the constructors of the new Schluesselburg prison! I could not understand how he was able to reconcile his soul to such a work.

‘You should at least,’ I said to him, ‘construct the prison in such a manner as to enable the prisoners to escape.’ Little did I think at that time that I was thus making a suggestion on my own behalf.

‘Impossible,’ he replied. ‘We are building under very strict supervision. Only recently a Commission from St. Petersburg ordered a considerable portion of rough walling to be pulled down.’

‘And thus it will be impossible for the prisoners to escape?’

‘Unless they are well acquainted with the position of the pipes. I, of course, should be able to escape.’

He had no idea of the severity with which the prisoners were afterwards guarded. There was no chance for them even at night, when they were perpetually under the eye of the sentry as he passed from cell to cell.

XIII

VISITING OFFICIALS

‘O memory of the heart, thou art stronger
Than the sad remembrances of reason.’

BATJOUSHKOV.

VARIOUS officials visited our prison from time to time, and after every visit something fresh was given us. We received rags with which to keep our cells clean, or hot water to wash the basins, or a little dish for the soap, or slates or sand for our recreation-cages. All these innovations were evidently the result of requests by some of the prisoners. As arranged with my colleagues, I, too, addressed certain requests to the visiting Generals, but they were rarely granted. I asked, for instance, permission to correspond with my relatives. Impossible. I asked again for permission to attend the local church. Impossible. I particularly remember my conversation concerning the church.

‘I understand,’ I said to the General, ‘that there is an effort being made to attach a church to every prison. Why do you make an exception

of this prison, and of the Troubetzky bastion of the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul? There is a church already on this island, and consequently no need to build a new one.'

'Quite true; but this church is situated beyond the prison walls, and the law forbids the prisoners here to overstep this boundary. Besides, this is the first time that such a request has been made within the walls of a political prison. I assure you that, had two or three political prisoners at any time uttered a similar request, the church would have been built long ago.'

'This is not my personal request,' I replied, 'but that of a whole group of my colleagues, who have expressed the desire to attend church. Morozov will tell you the same. You may also ask our clergyman, and he will tell you how many people have this spring received the Sacrament. Moreover, we political prisoners were taken to church during ~~our~~ sojourn in the preventive prison, before and after our trial.'

'Yes; but that church is especially constructed for the prisoners. However, I shall place your request before the authorities.'

The Schluesselburg prison existed for twenty-one years, but no church was ever built.

One General asked me about the food. As I did not feel inclined to complain of or ask for anything, I replied evasively:

‘Personally, I have nothing against the food : it is prepared from fresh materials.’

‘Yes. But I should like to know,’ insisted the General, ‘how it tastes. How shall I put it ? Do you eat it ?’

‘Yes ; I eat it out of habit.’

At first I regretted not having told him that the food we received was too heavy for us, considering the little exercise we enjoyed. But I soon argued differently. Was it worth while to ask for a change of diet ? Was it not better to ask for more exercise, for gymnastics, for an orchard to work in, or any other possible means of physical labour in the open air ? In this case I compared my prison with the captive boat in Heine’s well-known poem. We, too, had to traverse an enormous stretch of time in our stuffy casemates. Before my imprisonment I had had an idea that one must necessarily feel discomfited and ashamed on becoming an inmate of a prison cell. As a human being one ought, indeed, to feel ashamed, but then, as a prisoner myself, I began to feel uncomfortable when I met the visitors—not for myself, but for them. With my sensitiveness, I mentally placed myself in the visitor’s position, and blushed for him, sharing the confusion which I imagined he felt.

In any case, the visiting officials were welcome guests : they broke the monotony of our life ; they

also reminded us of the outside world, rousing in us the hope of returning to it. The sweetest thought in prison is that of the return home. If it were only possible, as in a fairy-tale, to change into a bird and fly away, if only for a few minutes, and see what is going on there !

I have noticed that, in thinking over the past, there is nothing that awakens so keen a regret as the remembrance of the moments when we failed in perfect love to our neighbours. An awful desire takes possession of one in prison to repair such omissions. One is literally at times tortured by a kind of Platonic love. I think that the sufferings arising from these recollections of omitted kindness ought to be placed among the first in Dante's 'Inferno.'

After an absence of three years from our fellow-men, there remains not the slightest shadow of malice towards them. They appear, after a certain space of time, as so many bright angels, and one feels as if one could embrace the whole world.

In this unattainable love for humanity I found a source of consolation.

'If I am suffering,' I said to myself, 'and undergoing all kinds of privations, I must remember that other people are also suffering in one way or another ; and therefore I must wait until others have dried their tears before I complain of my fate.'

And under the influence of such thoughts it seemed to me that, in order to help myself, I must first help the whole world: then only should I find rest.

The love for general humanity is perhaps thus intensified in prison simply because we lack a particular object upon which to concentrate it. To the soldier-sentries we dared not speak; and, moreover, as we saw them, they were nothing more than dumb, inanimate machines. As for the director, we hardly exchanged more than a few words with him in the course of a week. A rare but welcome guest was the clergyman. His wise and kindly talk produced a quieting effect upon me. To my regret, these conversations always lasted only a very short time, and in the presence of those dumb witnesses, the soldiers.

On rare occasions the Governor of the prison, who was also the Commandant of the fortress, paid us a visit. In my time this post was occupied by Colonel Pokroshinsky. He endeavoured to show us some respect by avoiding to address us as 'thou,' but he, nevertheless, never employed the 'you.' He had the gift of being able to address us in the third person. He used, for instance, to stop on the threshold of a cell, and, looking intently at the prisoner, ask him:

‘How does the prisoner feel to-day?’

Some prisoners, by way of imitation, used to reply :

‘The prisoner feels poorly to-day.’

Under the command of the prison director were four officers, a doctor, and about a hundred men. The quartermaster of the gendarmes was the director’s right hand. After the affair of Myshkin, this quartermaster, a lean, alert little man, appeared for some time with his head bandaged.

XIV

SASHKA THE ENGINEER

‘Not in wide freedom, but under the prison arch,
We both, you and I, first met.
It was in those sad days when to life,
Weighed down by severe punishment, we said good-bye.’
V. N. FIGNER.

IN the spring of 1886 a garden was arranged for us on the eastern side of the prison yard. It was surrounded by a high wall, and divided into square sections, with five beds in each. Along the top of the wall which enclosed the garden was a scaffold for the gendarmes who were set to watch us. Nicolai Alexandrovitch and myself planted four of the plots of our section with turnip-radish, carrots, turnips, peas, and another vegetable; and the fifth, in the middle, we planted with cabbages. Our walks in the garden, especially when a bright green began to make its appearance on the beds, and butterflies, bees, and other insects made their appearance, were very agreeable. To our regret, we enjoyed this pleasure only twice a week. On other days we had to pass our recreation-time alone.

Our neighbours in the orchard were V. N. Figner and N. A. Wolkenstein.

We felt a natural desire to make the acquaintance of the other prisoners also. We decided to ask permission through the prison director to pass our recreation-time in turns with our other fellow-prisoners. The director promised to put our request before the authorities.

During my next recreation-time a short, dark, square-built man was brought into my cage. His hard, coarse features betrayed something un-Russian in his blood. He was dressed in a curious short vest made of the grey prison cloth. As soon as he entered the cage, he at once fell on me and started kissing me.

I introduced myself.

‘And I am Fedor Yourkovsky. Have you heard of me?’

‘No ; I don’t know you.’

‘But you have heard about Sashka the engineer?’

‘Of course I have heard of him. And so you are the engineer ! But why did you introduce yourself as Fedor and not as Alexander ?’

‘Oh, Sashka the engineer is only my assumed name, my appellation for purposes of conspiracy ; in reality I am neither Sashka nor an engineer. I served in the naval corps.’

‘Is the sailor Yourkovsky, the editor of the paper in Nicolaev, a relative of yours?’

‘He is my brother.’

We briefly related our past history to each other. During his service in the naval corps Yourkovsky became a member of a revolutionary circle hiding its identity under the modest name of ‘Whale-catching Society.’ The authorities, however, soon ascertained the real purpose of this society, and several of its members, including Yourkovsky, were dismissed from the naval corps. A time of hard trial began for the young man. He occupied various insignificant positions in various localities. Having been dismissed from the naval corps ‘for disloyalty,’ he was prevented from again entering any educational establishment. Yourkovsky was free, therefore, to devote himself entirely to the interests of the revolution. He told me a great deal about himself and his life in prison and in Kara. On my remarking on his herculean frame, he replied by relating to me several instances of his wonderful muscular strength. ‘We, the Yourkovskys,’ he said, ‘originally came from the Black Sea district. My father was a man of enormous physical strength. In his capacity of inspector of prisons he often used to play a joke on the directors. He would take hold of the iron grating at the window and, giving it a shake, tear

it away. 'See,' he then said to the jailers, 'how badly your grating is fixed.'

On separating, we said good-bye for a month or two, as his turn for meeting me would not come round again before that time had elapsed.

Three days later I was taken out to meet another fellow-prisoner. 'Whom will Fate send me now?' I wondered, with a feeling of intense curiosity, whilst I was walking towards the garden.

The door opened, and again Yourkovsky entered. The director had evidently misunderstood our request.

Fedor Nicolaevitch had brought with him a piece of bread and some garlic, which he started eating at once.

'You see how much I eat. For some time after my arrest I suffered from dyspepsia. They consulted the doctor. He ordered them to give me two or even three portions. He said that this unhealthy appetite of mine would then disappear.'

'And where did you get this curious costume?'

'In Kara. We had permission there to alter our jackets as we found it convenient.'

'Did you find your sojourn in Kara more agreeable than in Schluesselburg?'

'At first I liked it very well after my prison

life in the towns. In Kara we had a Cossack circle. All important questions were settled in common by the circle. But the being continually shut up with the same persons at last became so boring and unbearable that I often recalled my solitary confinement with some regret. Sometimes I longed so heartily after solitude that I had to ask the prison inspector to put me alone in a cell. It is difficult to say in what way it is better, or rather in what way it is worse, to be in solitary confinement or in the constant company of a limited number of the same individuals. If I must give an answer, then I should say that each case has its advantages at times. It is unpleasant to be always alone, but the constant intercourse with the prison company is not always agreeable. Sometimes this noisy crowd of individuals, with whom one is forcibly thrown, so unnerve and bore one that it is quite a relief, as I said, to pass some time alone with oneself or in the hospital, where one may find some solitude to enable one to concentrate one's thoughts and to possess one's own soul. I may add that, my stay in Schluesselburg being only as yet a short one, I have not so far experienced the boredom of many years' solitary confinement. But having known both kinds of imprisonment, I should personally prefer a common room for prisoners to a solitary cell. There is an ancient

Russian proverb, "Even death is beautiful among people."

'And why have you been transferred to Schluesselburg?'

'Because I escaped from Kara. The tediousness of the prison in Kara had become so unbearable to some of us that we decided to make our escape at the risk of our lives. All the winter long we were preparing for our escape. We manufactured knives for ourselves in the workroom, laid up a store of food, and worked out the plan of our escape. We were only waiting for the spring to try our luck. We knew that we should be pursued, and decided to run in various directions. Myshkin (he was also with us) was to go towards the east, towards the great ocean, others towards the west, whilst my lot was to run to the south in the direction of the Chinese frontier. If one of us, so we thought, drew the pursuers after him, then the others would be able to escape. May arrived. The snow began to disappear from the marshy forests. We could wait no longer; in spring one longs more than ever for freedom. We fixed on a convenient night, and slipped out of prison. I walked quickly southwards towards the forest. All went well. I was aware of no pursuit. I inhaled the pleasant smell of corn, and felt quite joyful, thinking that I should soon reach the frontier.

Suddenly the weather changed, and snow began to fall. And what snow! I could hardly continue to walk. I struggled along in the forest, growing terribly tired with plodding through the deep snow. What was to be done? At last I found some kind of a bear's den under the roots of some fallen trees, and slipped into it. The weather, as if determined to delay me, grew worse; a fierce wind arose and blew the snow into great heaps. I sat in my cave munching my last piece of bread. "I may perish here," I thought, "but nothing shall make me return." The cold was benumbing me, and hunger was gnawing at my vitals. I mentally began saying good-bye to life. But the feeling of self-preservation was still strong in me. I crept out from my hole. The wind had considerably abated. I decided to try and creep through the forest. I might, perhaps, meet some shepherds on the steppes. They, as a rule, live in peace with vagabonds and escaped convicts, welcome them hospitably at their camp-fires, and give them food and drink. In recognition thereof the escaped convicts never hurt them nor touch their cattle. I managed to crawl somehow through the snow, spying for a smoke in the forest. Hunger was spurring me onwards, and I got a good distance from my cave. At last I perceived the desired smoke. "They must be the shepherds," I thought. I

seemed to regain my strength, and walked straight towards the camp-fire. But suddenly there emerged from behind the bushes a party of Cossacks armed with guns. All was lost; I could not escape their bullets. I approached them.

“ “ Whither are you bound ? ”

“ “ Whither Fate will lead me. ”

“ “ Come along : you are frozen ; have some tea with us. ”

“ I sat down beside their camp-fire. One Cossack poured out a cup of tea and offered it to me. I eagerly stretched out my hand, when I was suddenly seized by the arms and thrown on my back. Whilst their colleague was pretending to treat me to tea, two Cossacks had stolen up behind me. I could still have shaken these off, but there were many more, and all armed. I only asked :

“ “ Have you been sent for me ? ”

“ “ Yes ; and what a long time we have been looking for you ! ”

“ They tied my hands together with a horse chain. They threw a lasso over my waist, and placed me on horseback. One mounted Cossack pulled me along by the lasso, whilst the other behind me pulled me back. Thus we marched in file towards Kara. If my horse stepped ever so little out of line, one Cossack jerked me

forwards and the other back. I suffered agonies. Never in my life have I experienced such fierce physical suffering.'

Yourkovsky, saddened by his reminiscences, brought his tale to an end.

'What happened to you afterwards?'

'We were all caught and brought here to Schluesselburg.'

XV

MONEY THE MAINSTAY OF THE REVOLUTION

‘First came the loss of light and air,
And then of darkness too :
I had no thought, no feeling—none—
Among the stones I stood a stone.’

The Prisoner of Chillon.

‘THREE things are necessary for the prosecution of war—money, money, and money.’ The truth of this statement, attributed, I think, to Napoleon, manifests itself afresh at every renewal of war. The conditions of political and economical life are such that without money, without this prime lever, it is really impossible to bring any enterprise to a successful issue. And the social revolutionaries, towards the end of the reign of Alexander II., also began to understand that without money it was impossible to struggle against the Government.

‘Money ! money !’ was the constant cry heard at that period in the various revolutionary circles.

A prominent member of the military revolutionary organization in the eighties told me that in many circles it was laid down as a rule that at

least one hour at each meeting was to be devoted to the question of money, and to the discussion of the means whereby it could be obtained. The need of money compelled the revolutionaries to adopt even illegal means for obtaining it. On June 3, 1879, the Government treasury at Kherson was broken into, the thieves entering through a subterranean passage which had been made from a neighbouring house, and about one million and a half roubles were stolen. It was afterwards proved by the Odessa Military Court, held on January 10, 1880, that the instigators of this robbery, Helena Rossikova, Ludmilla Terentyeva, Jacob Pogoryelov, and Tatyana Morozova, were members of a secret society, the aim of which was to upset the existing political and social system in Russia.

The money, according to the declaration of the accused, was to be employed for the purpose of carrying on the struggle for popular freedom. Judges and experts were equally struck by the cleverness with which these people, who had no special technical knowledge to help them, had constructed the underground passage into the treasury. It led from the neighbouring house belonging to Kamsin, and was 10 sazhen long and 1 arsheen wide and high. It ended in an opening in the floor 1 arsheen in diameter, just under the safe where the money was deposited.

‘ Who had been chief manager in the matter ?’
the accused were asked.

‘ Sashka.’

‘ Who is he ?’

‘ We don’t know.’

This Sashka must evidently be a clever engineer, the judges decided. But no trace of Sashka was to be found.

In 1882 I occupied a small room in a private house in Nicolaev. From time to time a relative of my landlady, an examining magistrate in specially important cases, used to call to see her. I made his acquaintance. Once, in the course of conversation, he mentioned that he had participated in the search for the money stolen from the treasury at Kherson.

‘ Have you found the money ?’ I asked.

‘ Almost the whole sum. Very little has been lost. I myself discovered the sums which Sashka the engineer, at Aleshki, had hidden in the ground.’

‘ And thus you traced the whereabouts of Sashka the engineer ?’

‘ He has long since been arrested.’

The examining magistrate then told me all he knew about him. His information was not very flattering for Sashka. I heard afterwards that Sashka had been sent into penal servitude at Kara. A few years passed, and then my turn

came to be sent to prison. And here at Schlueselburg I unexpectedly met this famous Sashka, in the shape of the modest prisoner Fedor Nicolae-vitsh Yourkovsky. He told me the part he had taken in the robbery.

‘Tell me, please, how it happened?’ I asked him.

‘I had nothing to do,’ he said, ‘with the digging of the underground passage. When I joined the others the passage was ready; all I was asked to do was to get the money out of the town. Disguising myself as a coal merchant, I obtained a pair of oxen, loaded my cart with coal-sacks full of money, and started, calling to my oxen “*Tzob, tsob, tzobé.*” I got safely out of the town. We divided the money, and left for various parts. I myself went to Aleshki, a small locality on the banks of the Dnieper. Here I came across a police officer, and entered into conversation with him. I treated him with fruit. As I was afraid that in case of a search the large sums of money found on me would bring me into trouble, I hastened to hide it underground, and, escaping from the police officer, went on board a steamer just leaving for Nicolaev. The police officer had already before my arrival received a telegram ordering him to arrest any suspicious travellers. I had, however, so charmed him by my amiability that he hesitated before he could

decide to arrest me. He therefore first wired to Kherson, to the effect that there had arrived in Aleshki an apparently charming stranger, who inspired no suspicion whatever. Should he arrest him? The reply from Kherson was: "Arrest him immediately." But it was too late. I was already with relatives of mine in Nicolaev, and there embarked on the first steamer for Odessa. And whilst they were looking for me there, I was already out of Odessa and roaming about Russia.'

'But tell me, why did they give you the surname of "engineer," if you had taken no part in the digging of the underground passage?'

'This is explained by the fact that I was not present in court during the trial. The accused, noticing that I was absent, threw the entire guilt on the shoulders of an unknown personage, Sashka. And, in reality, the underground passage had been made magnificently. They say that the treasurer, seeing the seals and locks untouched, suspected nothing, and quietly entered the safe. Imagine his horror when he perceived the empty box. He examined the safe; everything seemed in order. He then sent for the police. They again examined the room, and then discovered the opening in the floor. Where did the opening lead to? They guessed, and after some discussion a constable was ordered to go down into

it, but he was afraid. Another constable was asked, but he also was afraid, until at last a porter came forward, offering to go down and examine the gallery. He crept along underground, and at last came to some well-furnished apartments. He looked round ; they were shut up and locked. After examination he pretty well guessed to whom the house belonged, and went back to the others, who were impatiently expecting him. His guess proved to be right. The apartments were searched, and there were found about twenty-five cartloads of fresh earth, which had been dug out for the making of the passage.'

XVI

A MOTHER'S LAST BLESSING

‘I endured, languished, and suffered,
And what for? When in the prime of life
Once more I looked upon God’s world,
And when in the sweet murmur of the forest
I again knew freedom’s charm,
I carried to the grave
The longing for my sacred home,
The regret of hopes deceived,
And the shame of your pity.’

LERMONTOV.

‘FEDOR NICOLAEVITSH, how is your health to-day?’ I asked Yourkovsky at our next meeting.

‘You talk about my health! Do you not hear cries at night? It is I who am calling out, tortured by nightmare.’

And, indeed, during my sojourn in Schluesselburg not one night passed on which the prison walls did not re-echo with those soul-rending shrieks.

Yourkovsky thought a great deal about his return home to Little Russia. Curiously enough, neither his struggle with the Government nor the amelioration of the life of the people formed

the theme of his meditations. He wanted rest after the restless life of many years ; he also wanted a little personal happiness in a Little Russian hamlet, where he hoped to lead a rustic life. He composed verses, in which dark-eyed maidens, melons, scenes in orchards, and similar delights of a peasant nature, figured prominently.

After several meetings with Yourkovsky, I was convinced that the prison director had misunderstood my request. He had simply sent one prisoner to be with me, instead of several in turns.

‘If I am only to have F. N. Yourkovsky as a companion,’ I said to the director, ‘then at least let me be allowed to see Nicolai Alexandrovitch Morozov once more to say good-bye to him.’

Morozov expressed a similar wish on the very same day. We were again brought together, and not again separated until I left the fortress.

What became of Yourkovsky ?

For twelve years he entertained the hope of leaving Schluesselburg, but never lived to see it realized. The prison became his grave.

The following details have been given by Madame L. A. Wolkenstein, a witness of his sorrowful end :

Yourkovsky had for many years been suffering with his kidneys, which rendered him excessively irritable. As he refused, however, to talk of his



LUDMILLA VOLKENSTEIN

illness, the prison authorities and the doctor attributed his irritability to his bad disposition, and unkindly inscribed his name in the punishment book. They, nevertheless, avoided actually punishing him. At last, two months before his death, Yourkovsky, at the repeated request of his colleagues, was examined by the doctor, and it was discovered that he was suffering from dropsy. The authorities and the doctor, evidently feeling some pricks of conscience, paid him all possible attention for the next two months. When he was lying there quite helpless, they asked permission to transfer him to a hospital in St. Petersburg, where his mother could come to see him. This octogenarian lady had, many and many a time, craved permission to see her son, and at last, in 1896, she sent him, in a letter full of despair, her last blessing, her cross, and her Prayer-book, from which she had been wont to pray all the time her son had been a prisoner—*i.e.*, for sixteen years. She told him that she now lacked the strength to travel to St. Petersburg. The request about the transfer of Yourkovsky would have been granted, in view of the fact that the gracious measures of the Manifesto in honour of the Coronation of the Tsar were also to be applied to the prisoners in Schluesselburg, a fact of which they were ignorant. As he had already served his fifteen years'

sentence, and was now only being detained on account of his escape from Kara, Yourkovsky would undoubtedly have been transferred to St. Petersburg in accordance with the tenor of the Manifesto. He ardently wished not to die in the hateful cell, but on the way home, or on a steamer endeared to him by many personal and family reminiscences. But Fate had willed that he should die in his cell on September 5, 1896. He met death manfully. In the night he was asked whether he would see the clergyman. He refused, but asked his colleagues who were present to crave permission from the Commandant to allow him to see the two women prisoners (V. N. Figner and L. A. Wolkenstein) and say good-bye to them. The request was granted, and Yourkovsky, almost suffocating, but still in full possession of his consciousness, wished them an affectionate farewell. Two hours later he expired.* His body, dressed by his friends, remained in the cell, which for three hours, before permission was given to open the doors, remained locked. When the coffin arrived, his friends, taking a last farewell, placed his mother's letter with her last blessing and her Prayer-book

* He was the only patient who was allowed to receive certain attentions from his fellow-prisoners and the authorities. Formerly it used to be quite impossible to be of any assistance to a patient.

on his breast. At six o'clock on the following day, whilst the morning tea was being distributed, the prison gates were heard to grate on their hinges, and the friends who had been watching informed the others that the coffin was being taken out. Four soldiers, preceded by an officer, bore the box beyond the gates of the fortress. Thus perished in confinement a forty-years-old hero. Had he in his youth not been dismissed from the naval corps for his participation in the so-called 'Whale-catching Society,' who knows but that Russia might, perhaps, have possessed in him an active and energetic Admiral of her fleet ?

XVII

EASTER GREETINGS

‘ A gloomy, drizzling rain has fallen all day,
Bringing dullness and boredom in its wake;
I can neither read nor think, I feel so lazy,
And with difficulty I even lift my hand.’

P. S. POLIVANOV.

DAYS, months, and years follow one another in their regular course. We can imagine an end to everything except space and time, incomprehensible in their eternity to our mortal conceptions. Whether awake or asleep, time, independent of our consciousness of it, uninterruptedly pursues its endless way. People say that time passes quickly in prison. This is to a certain extent true when we look back upon it as a thing of the past, but the present moment seems long and tedious. It is as difficult to bear the monotony of the days within four prison walls as it is to walk with unflagging energy along a sloppy, long, and tedious road.

Many of the prisoners were unable to keep count of the days. Nicolai Alexandrovitch asked



PIERRE POLIVANOV

me at our first meeting 'what date of what month it was.'

I could answer his question at once, as I was keeping count, thanks to the pages of my Bible, which I read daily. In this way I got through it several times, from beginning to end.

The days of the week, however, we all knew by heart. The traditional peas for dinner was a sure indication of Wednesdays and Fridays, whilst the turn of buck-wheat, barley, or wheat *kasha* announced the other days of the week. Only on one day of the year did the dinner form an exception to the severe monotony of the prison fare. This day was Easter Sunday. I remember this festival also for other reasons.

On the night of Saturday in Passion Week, remembering how I used to celebrate the festival as a child among the home faces, I grew so nervous that I could not sleep. Walking to and fro in my cell, I mentally kissed all my relatives and acquaintances, and felt ready to kiss the whole world, and to make peace with and forgive everybody.

All depends, I thought, upon the point of vantage from which we view things. The further removed the object of our contemplation, the more dispassionately we regard it. When reading, for instance, in ancient history about the campaigns of Julius Cæsar, we experience the

same sentiments for Cæsar as for his enemy, Vercingetorix. At such a vast distance of time our sympathies for the two nations, like the rays of a distant luminous point, run almost parallel. In this way we can understand that when we are removed from the world altogether our judgment may become as dispassionate as that of God Himself. Standing, as I am, outside the world and its fights, I can see that if one nation is anxious about the welfare of its native land, another has the same object equally at heart. One has only to look at the two adversaries from a distance to bring about peace between them as far as we are concerned.

The summons to the Easter morning service interrupted my meditations. I stood still and eagerly listened to every sound of the bell. Oh, how I longed at that moment to be in church, to see the multitude of festive faces and the burning tapers, and to listen to the oft-repeated words: 'Christ has risen'! My heart ached, and I was conscious that I was going to burst into tears. I began to walk about my cell, recalling to mind Easter songs which I used to sing as a child in the choir. Dawn peered through the dim window-panes. For some reason I expected that the director would visit us immediately after prayers. I thought something extraordinary must happen on this day.

But an hour or two passed, and the director made no appearance.

‘I wonder whether he will forget, for one minute at least, his official position, and meet us as fellow-Christians with the usual Easter greeting? Who knows but that he may, perhaps, kiss us too?’

The time for the distribution of our portion of bread approached, the bolts of the entrance-door were unbarred, the sound of boots was heard along the stone floor; the doors of the cells were being opened and shut. My turn came. I felt some confusion. As usual, the soldiers hastily entered my cell, locked up my bedstead, put a plate with Easter eggs, pieces of Easter cake, and cheese curds on my table, and as quickly disappeared. No trace, however, of the director or of Easter greetings.

They ought not to have given us Easter eggs. They only served to bring out in relief all our estrangement from the world, all the misery of the stony grave. The egg seemed to speak of resurrection whilst we were still as dead men. We did not even know whether we should ever have a future life in this world. I felt sadder still. I swallowed, amidst tears, a few pieces of the Easter cake, and helplessly let my head fall on my hands. The sleepless night soon made itself felt, and I fell asleep.

But suddenly I became aware that some one was calling me and shaking me by the shoulder. I opened my eyes, jumped up, and recoiled in horror: soldiers were standing in front of me with my dinner. How could they have entered without my hearing the noise of the opening door? How did it happen that I, usually such a light sleeper, was being thus rudely shaken, having heard nothing? Was it not all a dream?

I was so frightened that for a few seconds I lost countenance. The prison director, noticing the expression of horror on my face, tried to calm me. Only then I remembered under what circumstances I had fallen asleep, and understood what had happened.

After that my bedstead was never locked up, and I was allowed to avail myself of it even during the day. But I never took advantage of this permission. On the one hand, I was afraid of giving way, losing courage, and growing enfeebled: a bed predisposes to laziness and unnecessary rest; on the other, I feared the sleepless nights which would follow if I slept during the day. But the open bedstead served me as an excellent table. I was at that time occupying myself with Greek translations, and had at my disposal some books, a copy-book, a pencil, and a slate. There was not much room on my table, and I covered my bed, and even the floor, with

books. But in order to work on this improvised table, I had to remain on my knees. At first my legs ached from such an unaccustomed position; but later on, when corns grew on my knees, like those on the leg of a camel, I could remain in a kneeling posture for hours at a stretch.

About that time I obtained permission to avail myself, not only of a slate-pencil and a lead-pencil, but also of ink. And instead of a small copy-book with ten or twelve pages, I received a larger one containing twenty-three leaves.

Casting a glance back upon the four years I passed in various prisons, I now see how much these studies and books helped me to bear discomfort, insults, and illness.

XVIII

THE BLUE SKY AGAIN

‘ It was the carol of a bird ;
It ceased, and then it came again :
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mind was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery.
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track ;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before.’

The Prisoner of Chillon.

TO-DAY, instead of the morning exercise, I was taken out for a walk in the afternoon about four o'clock. It was beautiful warm weather. The sky was blue and the air serene. I felt no inclination to leave the courtyard. For fifteen or twenty minutes only I enjoyed the fresh air. With a feeling of sadness I followed the two soldiers back to my cell. Slowly, methodically, with a measured step, like oxen, they moved along. They must have been terribly tired of the continual march from the prison to the fences and back.

On entering my cell, I at once perceived that the skylight was open. It was usually closed before the return of a prisoner. What did it signify? Could they have forgotten it? I wondered, mightily pleased. I could not reach it myself: it was so high. I could only just touch the first row of the window-panes with my finger-tips. But no, they forgot nothing here. The skylight had purposely been left open on account of the warm days. I stood beneath this window, unable to tear my eye away from the tiny piece of blue sky, where, from time to time, I saw a pair of pigeons flitting across.

‘A tiny piece of sky,’ I thought, ‘and what feelings it calls forth in the breast of the prisoner, and with how much food for reflection it furnishes him!’ I remembered how, three years ago, I was lying upon my back in company with my brother, a college student, in the green meadows, basking in the sun and peering up at the blue sky. My brother was quite calm, his soul as clear as the blue sky which spread in a vast cupola above us. A sweet sleep was creeping over him, and he was shutting his eyes like a lazy cat.

‘Listen, my brother,’ I said. ‘Suppose you had to write a composition about your impressions at the present moment, what would you say?’

‘What is there to say?’ he replied lazily. ‘A blue sky, and that is all.’

I was pleased at that time to avail myself of the opportunity and show off my knowledge. I remember with what fire, animation, and pride I seized upon the subject, first pointed out to him the beauty of the blue sky from a poetical and mythological point of view, and then, passing over to my favourite subject, astronomy, I gave free vent to my thoughts, feeling like an eagle on the heights. I talked and talked until we were called home.

And now I was again standing looking up at the blue sky, and my thoughts were chasing one another like a running brook. I felt as if inspiration were coming from the very sky.

Oh, if they would leave the skylight open overnight ! I longed for it as for an inexpressible happiness. Then the lovely stars would shine on me. How long it was since I last beheld them ! The last time I enjoyed their splendour had been two years before, when I was being taken back to prison late at night after a trial. I just stepped out of the carriage, and, looking up, I felt a thrill of enchantment ; the whole sky was studded with bright stars. How wonderful they appear when one has not seen them for some time ! Oh, if only I could see them to-night !

It soon grew dark. The sky took a greenish shade. I was still standing beneath my window, imagining how the stars would look that night,

when I suddenly heard the soft, slightly trembling sound of a key-bugle. What a delight ! How wonderfully the familiar melody harmonized with the silent summer evening !

‘To the lovely mountains
We return ;
The former rest
We again enjoy.’

But who was playing ? Evidently some one in a boat was passing under the prison walls. I had often played and sung this song in my youth. Who did not know it ? And I conjured up in my imagination the last scene from the ‘Troubadour.’ I saw the stone arches of the prison in the fortress and the iron grating at the window. The exhausted mother of the Troubadour was lying on the straw, and, half asleep, with prophetic voice she sang to him the sweet airs of a free life.

‘Great God !’ I thought, trembling for joyful agitation, ‘it is for us, for us prisoners, that he is playing this lovely aria ! He has purposely come near us to inspire us, by means of these delicate tones, with the sweet hope of our return home to our own people, to our mothers and friends.’

An unusual agitation took possession of me. I should have liked to call out to him, to tell

him that we heard his invitation to happiness, and to sing with him. I excitedly seized the table, touched the wall, went to the door, and then again went to the window, lifting up my hands to the sky. I was anxious to communicate to some one all my fancies, my impressions and feelings. And the alluring voice, as if of a troubadour come down from heaven, continued to sing of sweet things :

‘ On the lute anew
You will play ;
The happiness of yore
Again you will see.’

Tears rolled down my cheeks, and, moved by the music, tired and exhausted by my deep emotion, I sat down on my stool. In those happy minutes, fearful lest I should lose one of the sounds, I was ready to pray with Manric, and I thought I heard his answering voice : ‘ Have confidence in me ; your trust will not be in vain ; I shall implore Heaven for you.

Trrr . . . trrr ! The door of my cell was suddenly opened, and two soldiers entered ; one of them placed the lamp on the table, whilst the other shut the barred window by means of a hook at the end of a long stick. The illusion was gone. They had deprived me of the sky, the stars, and the heavenly sounds.

I remembered the rich man in hell, who, not unlike us prisoners, could only gaze from afar upon the joys of the righteous in Abraham's bosom. And the more marked the contrast between our' vegetative life and that of others who are free, the more one perceives how wide a gulf separates the prison from the rest of the rejoicing world ; the greater our gloom, the deeper our mental suffering.

Soon afterwards I again enjoyed a few heavenly moments beneath the open lattice window. It was very hot on August 24. The director evidently thought that it must be very stifling in my cell, for he himself suggested that the window should be left open over-night.

'If you please, if you please !' I hastened to reply. 'Oh, how happy I am !' I mentally exclaimed, enjoying in anticipation the pleasure of gazing at the stars.

How dear the most ordinary things grow to us when we have been deprived of them ! No one appreciates freedom so well as he who has been without it ; no one so well appreciates fresh air as he who has been a prisoner.

About eight o'clock the first star appeared to the north-east of the sky.

'It must be Capella,' I thought.

A short while later two more small stars appeared to the right of it. I at once mentally

made a note of their respective positions, and again peered into the dark sky.

‘Stars, you have always been a favourite subject with those who dream of love and happiness. You, who are the emblems of freedom, will you not foretell for me a speedy release? You beautiful Capella! you first became visible to me through this window. Be thou my guiding star, and lead me forth from here.’ Thus I prayed in holy rapture, looking up at the twinkling stars.

Notwithstanding that I was so enraptured, and no doubt in consequence of the fresh air, I fell asleep towards midnight sitting on my stool. I awoke at about three, and again looked through the window. The picture had changed. In the eastern sky I perceived the classic brothers Dioscuri, the two bright stars Castor and Pollux, and to their right the brilliant planet Saturn.

Castor and Pollux, those two ancient protectors of navigators, were considered by the Greeks to be true indicators of a quiet and hospitable shore. They also attributed to them those electric fires which in calm weather sometimes appear at the mast-head. I, as a mariner, felt doubly pleased to note down in my copy-book these pleasant messengers of a happy sea voyage.

Many years have since passed, but I still

religiously keep the faded leaf upon which I drew those stars, as a precious souvenir of that unique night in prison when from the depth of the sky there shone forth the first beacon light on my way towards freedom.

XIX

SAKHALIN

MY first prison in the Troubetzkoy bastion was more accessible to the animated world. Not only insects, but also birds, came to me through my barred window. Twice or three times a pair of pigeons even started building a nest at my window, in spite of the pitiless hands of the jailers, who took away the heap of twigs they had dragged together. In the present prison, however, my guests consisted only of flies and spiders. The latter occupied my attention in the evening, when they started chasing and catching one another on the ceiling—and here I for the first time noticed the fact that the females sometimes devoured the males.

During the last days of August a yellow butterfly flew into my cell through the skylight and got in between the frames. Restlessly it beat against the glass, but did not make an attempt to fly towards the open *vasistas*. For a whole day I watched it, sympathizing with its desire to get out.

‘ Whence do you come, inhabitant of ether ?
Tell me, unexpected guest from the skies,
What zephyr brought you hither
Into my gloomy habitation ?’

I recalled Zhukovsky’s ‘ Prisoner,’ which I had loved to read in my youth.

‘ I am sorry for you, weak butterfly, but what can I do for you ? I have myself been knocking against the window bars for four years, longing for freedom. All that remains for me is to share with you my solitude and my scanty viands.’

I soaked tiny pieces of sugar and threw them between the bars. To my satisfaction, the butterfly alighted on the sugar and began to suck it with its long proboscis.

In the night I had a new idea—I would catch the butterfly and set it free. I tore a few thin threads out of the sheeting, and impatiently awaited the moment when I should be taken out for a walk. On my way to the fence I mustered courage, and picked three yellow dandelions. The jailers looked askance at me, but said nothing. I heaved a sigh of relief, and, pressing the flowers in my hand, I was rejoicing, thinking to myself how I was going to release the butterfly. I would attach the flowers to the thread, and throw them between the double frames ; the butterfly would settle on the flowers, and I would softly pull it up to the *vasistas*, and then the dear butterfly might fly wherever it liked.

But what was this ? The soldiers were taking me towards a different part of the prison.

They conducted me to the old part of the building, where I could see no trace of a living soul. The stillness of the grave reigned there, and a damp air blew all around. A number of doors led into a small corridor. One of these doors was opened, and I was ushered into a half-lit cell. I had scarcely had time to look round me and grasp the meaning of it when the Commandant of the prison entered and solemnly informed me that my solitary confinement was at an end and that a long journey was before me.

‘Whither ?’ I asked. ‘To Siberia ?’

‘No ; a little farther.’

I understood, and sighed heavily.

‘Well, what does it matter ?’ I consoled myself. ‘Anyhow, it is better in Sakhalin than in solitary confinement. There I shall enjoy pure air. I shall have movement and useful work, and, above all, I shall meet other human beings. Anywhere, as long as one is to live among one’s fellow-creatures—let them even be the inhabitants of Sakhalin.’

I was not allowed to take leave of my comrades. However great my joy at my release, I was sorry to leave Nicolai and the Little Russian poet, with whom I had shared all the prison hardships. What a lucky man I was to be taken to Sakhalin before them !

In the evening the director came to congratulate me upon my release.

‘God grant,’ he said, ‘that your stay there may also be a short one. There are various grades of exiles—exiles on trial, reformed exiles, convict settlers, and peasants, and, in virtue of manifestos, they are quickly being transferred from one list to another. I wish with all my heart that you may soon return home.’

This attention paid to me by the director somewhat surprised me. Usually reserved, taciturn, and strictly fulfilling the orders of the higher authorities, he now suddenly could not resist the temptation of exchanging with me a few words in an unofficial capacity and without the presence of soldiers.

When on the next day the prison director handed me over to the officer who had come for me, he asked him not to put me in irons.

‘Don’t fear; he will not run away,’ he added.

And thus the iron prison gates were opened for me.

I thought of the lines from ‘The Prisoner of Chillon’:

‘My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are—even I
Regain’d my freedom with a sigh.’

The prison director accompanied me to the landing-place, where a large barge was waiting. An hour later I was in a post-carriage drawn by three horses, on my way to St. Petersburg, whence I was going to be taken to the other end of the world, where prisoners usually went with tears in their eyes and despair in their souls. But I was happy. And how could I help being glad when I again beheld the animated villages, the green meadows and the yellow fields? How could I help being in ecstasies when my eye was embracing the vast space of the earth and the blue sky? I greeted every hamlet, every bush, and every bird as something dear, something I had not seen for some time.

The peasants whom we passed looked at me with astonishment. I was gay and smiling among the grim soldiers, whose faces evidently appeared even more severe and gloomy by comparison.

How relative everything is in the world!

XX

THE DEPARTURE OF THE LAST PRISONERS

‘ At last men came to set me free ;
I ask’d not why, and reck’d not where,
It was at length the same to me,
Fetter’d or fetterless to be :
I learn’d to love despair.
And thus when they appear’d at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own.’

The Prisoner of Chillon.

IN the autumn of 1905 fourteen prisoners were still languishing in the Schluesselburg fortress. Twelve of these were being detained in the New Prison, whilst two were in the Old. Four days after, on October 17, an amnesty was declared which affected nine of the Schluesselburg prisoners. They were : N. A. Morozov, M. Th. Frolenko, M. P. Popov, P. L. Antonov, G. A. Lopatin, S. A. Ivanov, M. B. Novoroussky, T. D. Loukashevitch, and N. P. Starodvorsky.

At last the hour of freedom had arrived. And how long they had been waiting for it ! Three of

them had each passed twenty-one years in Schluesselburg, but none of the nine had been there a shorter time than eighteen years. And if one were to count the years they had passed in various other prisons before coming to Schluesselburg, then some of them could boast of a quarter of a century of prison life.

The horror of it is inconceivable. I myself spent four years in various prisons, and I have not yet lost the impression that I passed a very long time in solitary confinement. I, too, know how people can 'live in tombs'; I myself have experienced all the horrors of slow death within the walls of the Schluesselburg prison; but even I fail to understand how any human being could have stood such martyrdom for twenty-five years. I admire these people, and bow before their moral strength in the midst of sufferings.

It is terrible even to think of it: a quarter of a century within the tomb-like walls of a prison!

They entered it young, healthy, strong, and in full bloom; they left it feeble, old, ill, pale, exhausted.

Besides those nine above-mentioned prisoners, there still remained in Schluesselburg five 'politicals.' Three of them, Karpovitsh, Gershouny, and Melnikov, were confined in the New Prison, whilst Sassonov and Sikorsky were in the Old Prison.



GREGORY A. GERSHOUNY

On October 28 eight of the sufferers left the fortress.* Only the three detained in the New Prison were allowed by the prison authorities to see the others before their departure. All the eleven were assembled in one of the largest cages for recreation (in the corner of courtyard No. 1). Gregory A. Gershouny made a speech, and hope was expressed that even those remaining within the walls of the fortress would soon follow their comrades to St. Petersburg. On leaving the prison, the liberated men cast a last glance upon the terrible building, and at the windows they saw the dear faces of the friends remaining behind who were waving their farewells.

One of the Generals who visited the prison once said to the prisoners: 'No one ever walks out of these precincts: he is carried out either to the cemetery or into a lunatic asylum.' And yet on October 28 the incredible happened. People who had been buried alive for two decades left their living tombs and went out into the world of light. The happy freemen were first conducted to the prison office to take official leave of the prison authorities. They were then divided into two groups of four, and separately led to the landing-place. Here something unusual for the Schluesselburg island occurred; officers and

* The ninth, N. P. Starodvorsky, had been transferred a few days earlier to St. Petersburg.

subalterns, their wives, children, and servants—in a word, the entire population of the fortress—came out to accompany the liberated prisoners. They felt that with the departure of these last prisoners the importance of the fortress had disappeared, and that thus their own existence as jailers became superfluous. They understood perfectly well that the five remaining prisoners would not be there long. For its own sake, the Government would not long continue to maintain so large a staff of officials. Some of the gendarmes had grown so accustomed and even attached to the eight prisoners that they walked along with them, as if they had been relatives. Some of the prisoners were sincerely happy that they had been released, others were crying in the depth of their emotion. Several gendarmes even embraced the departing men.

‘The 28th of October is a great day,’ exclaimed one veteran; ‘it is the day of the fall of Schluesselburg.’

As the freed prisoners traversed the prison yards, the men and women accompanying them ran on in front to take another last look at them.

N. A. Morozov, G. A. Lopatin, M. B. Novoroussky, and T. D. Loukashevitch were placed on one steamer, and M. Th. Frolenko, M. P. Popov, P. L. Antonov, and S. A. Ivanov on another.



HERMAN LOPATIN

As long as they remained on deck, those on shore continued to wave their handkerchiefs. The passengers were now asked to go down into the cabins. The steamers started, and, turning round under the last tower of Golovin, kept close to the left bank, and then steamed into the middle of the Neva. The passengers were again allowed to go on deck. They glanced towards the east in the direction of the fortress, and, noticing the crowd on the bank still waving their handkerchiefs, they waved theirs in return.

Two months later, on January 30, 1906, the remaining five prisoners left the fortress.

The prison was deserted. The first prisoners entered on August 2, 1884; the last prisoner left it on January 30, 1906. Thus the newly constructed part of the fortress served as a prison for twenty-one years and six months.

After having taken (October 11, 1702) the fortress of Noteburg, or the ancient Oryeshok (Little Nut), afterwards known as Schluesselburg, Peter the Great wrote to Steyls: 'It is true this little nut was a hard one to crack, but, thank God, we have cracked it—not without pain, however, for many of our steel teeth have been broken or spoiled.'

These words of the hero-Emperor may also be applied to the prisoners who had been detained over two decades in the Schluesselburg fortress.

They had experienced a hard ordeal and had cracked a hard nut, and their teeth had literally been spoilt through scurvy, their health lost, and their nerves shattered. All these people were in their way heroes. They never submitted, they never compromised with their conscience—and they conquered. From whatever point of view one may look at them, the aureole of martyrdom for an idea will always surround them. Faith in the ideal fortified them, and lent them strength to bear the horrors of violence.

Not less deserving are those sufferers whose bones lie buried in the sand of Schluesselburg. Some were hurried to their graves by various illnesses, their constant prison companions; others, unwilling to wait for a natural death, hastened to leave the prison life in one way or another: ‘the hour of death brought them freedom.’ Many had been punished. Some had been brought to Schluesselburg to be hanged in the large courtyard of the Old Prison. The Government steamer, which carried from St. Petersburg to Schluesselburg the prisoners who had been sentenced to death, showed a red flag in the day and a red lamp at night. Thus, whilst warning off the other vessels as if from fire or gunpowder, the steamer involuntarily hoisted the emblem of freedom, the red flag for which the accused shed their blood.

The accused were quietly buried near the prison walls, without any of the usual ceremonies.

Formerly, before the New Prison was constructed, the dead prisoners used to be buried in the Preobraghensky cemetery, at a distance of about 2 or 3 versts* from town. The first victim of the New Prison, Klimenko, had also been buried there. But in order to hide the graves of the unhappy prisoners and to obliterate their memories, an order was issued to bury all 'politicals' on the island. The north-eastern corner of the fortress thus served as the burial-place.

* A verst equals 3,500 English feet.

XXI

TWENTY YEARS IN A LIVING TOMB

‘I soon perceived how difficult it was to live through such a beneficent change as freedom, after a long period of imprisonment. I felt afraid of the wide open space, afraid of the movement and noise in the streets. I avoided people and large gatherings, simply because, as V. N. Figner expressed herself, I had not yet grown out of the “taste for solitude.”’—M. J. ASHENBRENNER.

ONLY one of those who were liberated on October 28, 1905, may be considered a really free man. The others, although not in prison, are still bound to a special locality, and remain under the supervision of the local police. Even those who were tried in 1904 enjoy the privilege of travelling from one place to another within the narrow boundaries of a fixed locality.

Towards the end of March 1906, I visited the veteran Michael Julievitsh Ashenbrenner in Smolensk. One would have thought that the old man, after having passed two decades in Schluesselburg, would, especially in our stormy days, inspire no special fear. But, nevertheless, he is still treated as an exile, allowed to live only



MICHAEL JULIEVITSH ASHENBRENNER

within certain boundaries and under various restrictions.

M. J. Ashenbrenner was practically the only one of the prisoners confined in the fortress with whom I had been acquainted previous to my arrest. We first met in Nicolaev in the spring of 1882. He was then in command of a battalion of the Prague Regiment, with the rank of Sub-Colonel. We met several times in the course of the summer, until I left for St. Petersburg to follow a course of lectures in the Naval Academy. We incidentally met twice or thrice again in April 1883. Those were our last meetings. We were soon arrested and accused of participating in the military organization.

He was tried simultaneously with myself in the autumn of 1884, being accused of spreading revolutionary ideas among his comrades. And thus the deserving commandant of a battalion, famous in military circles as a fighting officer, was in the prime of his life buried alive within the walls of Schluesselburg.

Two decades had passed, and the doors of his tomb were at last opened, With surprise we saw him still alive.

Michael Julievitsh Ashenbrenner was born in September 1842. His grandfather, who had emigrated to Russia from Germany, was at first instructor in the corps of cadets in St. Peters-

burg, but afterwards became commandant of a brigade in Omsk. The father of Michael Julievitsh had also followed a military career—he was Colonel of the Engineering Department—whilst his mother (of the family of Naoumov) was the daughter of one of the heroic Generals of 1812. Faithful to the military traditions of the family, little Michael studied in the first corps of cadets, which he left with the rank of Lieutenant.

Michael Julievitsh began his service in Moscow in the company of marksmen. During the Polish insurrection he was offered the command of one of the regiments of Guards in Poland, at the seat of war. But Michael Julievitsh did his best to escape taking part in such an unjust war, as he considered it, and as a punishment for his temerity the authorities transferred him to Turkestan. There he remained four years, was promoted to the rank of Major, and received several Orders for his military achievements.

From Turkestan he was transferred to Kazan, where he served under General Glinko-Mavrin, the same who had ordered his transfer to Turkestan. In Turkestan, Michael Julievitsh fell ill with a severe fever, in consequence of which he was in the same year transferred to Bessarabia, being draughted into the Prague Regiment. His division was removed in 1877, before the Turkish War, to the Khersonese, and

Michael came with his regiment to Nicolaev. He had commanded a battalion for twelve years ; during the last years of his service he had frequently been transferred from the Prague to the Lublin Regiment and back.

I saw Michael Julievitsh in Nicolaev surrounded by the officers of his regiment. Their love for him almost amounted to adoration. His campaigns in Central Asia had made of him a good, cordial comrade, ready to lay down his very life for a friend. The open, straightforward character which distinguished the old soldiers of Turkestan and of the Caucasus in the 'fifties attracted the youths of the regiment to him, but called forth the displeasure of his superiors. Thus his colleagues, such as A. N. Kouropatkin, for instance, who had served with him in the same regiment during his first campaigns in Turkestan, rose higher and higher on the military ladder and reached the summit, whilst Ashenbrenner remained in a comparatively inferior position. But, on the other hand, he had a great deal of spare time at his disposal, and could devote a great deal of attention and work to military organization. Michael Julievitsh took leave of absence and travelled through Russia for that purpose, but his whole labour was frustrated by one of his co-workers, the retired artillery officer S. P. Degaev, who denounced Ashen-

brenner to the police, and communicated to them the list of members of the future military organization. Michael Julievitsh was sent to the fortress for an indefinite time. Nevertheless, he did not lose spirit. N. A. Morozov told me once during recreation-time that Michael Julievitsh was still alive (he had previously told me that he had been put to death), and that he sent his best regards to me, with the intimation that he was studying foreign languages, his belief being that we should soon be set free on condition of going at once abroad. But this 'soon' proved to be more than a decade.

In 1896, by virtue of the Coronation Manifesto, Michael Julievitsh's sentence to penal servitude for an indefinite period was commuted into one of a definite period of twenty years. It has been said that when the penal servitude sentence is being commuted into that of solitary confinement, eight or nine months of confinement are counted as a full year. But this regulation was not applied in the case of Michael Julievitsh, and he served his full sentence till September 1904.

Accompanied by gendarmes, M. J. Ashenbrenner was secretly taken to Smolensk, his native town. Even his relatives were not aware of the day of his arrival. Not once was he allowed to go home, but was kept for several days in the local prison. And then suddenly,

without any preliminaries, the prison doors were thrown open and he was abruptly told: 'You may go.'

He was free. No longer accompanied by soldiers he went out. But where should he go? After an absence of twenty years he recognized neither the houses nor the faces of the passers-by. Luckily, however, he had gone only a few steps when he met his own brother.

Having looked round his native town, Michael Julievitsh began to occupy himself with translations (the works of Sorel), and then started writing his reminiscences for a local paper and for the new journal, *The Past*. At the present moment literary work occupies his whole leisure. He feels no inclination for new acquaintances; he feels that he is a man of another period, and that many would scarcely understand him. But his attachment to his old friends is therefore the stronger, as also to those between whom and himself the famous Schluesselburg fortress creates a strong tie. The fortress alone seems to have existed for them for twenty-one years. Unfortunately, however, Michael Julievitsh is not allowed to leave his town, and cannot visit his friends. The latter, too, suffer from these new restrictions.

It is surely time to grant this sixty-four-years-old sufferer full freedom!

XXII

A VISIT TO THE RUSSIAN BASTILLE

‘ Here every step calls forth in our soul
Remembrances of years bygone.’

POUSHKIN.

IN March, 1906, the news was suddenly spread all over Russia that the Schluesselburg fortress and the prison were thrown open to the public. The secret historical prison was on view. It had been jealously guarded for many years from the eye of the nation, and now its guardians were ready to show it, and even to tell all that had happened there.

Verily ‘there is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed, and nothing secret that shall not be known.’ Formerly one was not even allowed to write about Schluesselburg, or to take photographs of it, not to mention visiting the island, much less the prisons on it.

For eight years after my return from the Far East I daily visited the town of Schluesselburg, so as to look at least from afar upon the fortress, so full to me of terrible reminiscences. I always

landed under the severe eyes of many gendarmes. There could have been no chance formerly of inspecting even the exterior of the prison ; now we were invited to do so. My wife accompanied me. She was afraid to leave me alone, thinking that a visit to the place of my former confinement might call forth terrible reminiscences and give me a nervous shock. And I myself was afraid for my wife. She had already managed to go down to Schluesselburg by herself, and had returned home in a state of great excitement. She was now going with me, for the second time. And thus keeping watch over each other, we went to visit the now deserted prison.

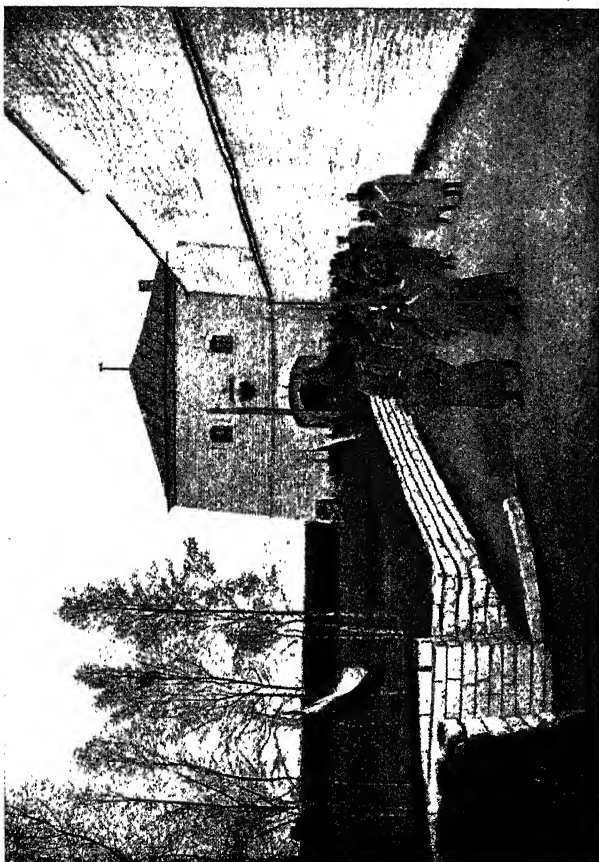
From a distance the aspect of the fortress may even be called beautiful, especially when the white walls are bathed in sunlight. The round corner towers with the coniform roofs are visible. From behind the walls of the fortress there emerges the green cupola of the church and the high spire of the steeple with its gilded cross.

In the company of other visitors we approached the western side of the island. It finishes in a sharp promontory, upon which stood a sentry's hut, with a pole for a flag, and all the necessaries for a fore-post. Formerly a sentry always mounted guard here ; now he has been removed as being superfluous.

‘Twenty years ago!’ flashed across my brain as my foot touched the shore.

We went a few steps, turned to the left, and stood before the Imperial tower with its gates, the only entrance to the fortress. All the other towers are round, and their embrasures are hermetically walled up, whilst this one is square at the base, with open windows. Over the gate of the entrance tower there is a large inscription bearing the word ‘Imperial,’ together with the arms and initials of the Emperor Alexander II, and a small tin box, with the number 17, under which this tower is inscribed in the list of buildings on the island. The red roof of the tower finishes in a pointed spire, with a large key for weathercock.

They say that when Peter took the Fortress of Noteburg, on October 11, 1702, he received from the Commandant Schlippenbach the large key of the fortress gates. Peter changed the name of the fortress into that of Schluesselburg (Key Town), and gave orders to place a key on the top of the chief tower. This key tower opened to him the doors of the River Neva, of the Baltic, and of Europe. But a key has two aspects; not only does it open, it also shuts. Does not this key over the chief tower in Schluesselburg speak of its double use? This key opened for Peter the lock of Noteburg, and simultaneously opened



IMPERIAL TOWER AND ENTRANCE TO THE FORTRESS

for him the way to the West; but this same key locked up unhappy prisoners for nearly two centuries.

Two gendarmes asked a few questions as a matter of form, and then led us into the interior of the fortress. We crossed the tower to the right. On a stone wall in the middle of the tower hangs an ancient image of the Holy Mother in a silver chasuble. On the wooden folds of the inner gates the following inscription was cut:

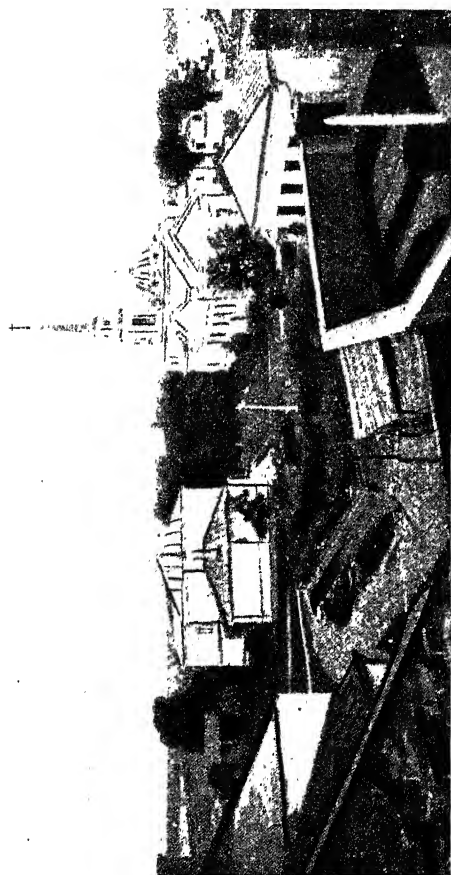
ANNO 1649
DEN 18 MAY
LESS.

This refers to the time of the Swedish occupation.

In the interior of the tower, just near the icon, there was a small door painted with black oblique stripes, like milestones. This door, we were told, led into the cellar of the tower. Now I began slowly to observe every detail. It was so unlike my first visit twenty years ago, when gendarmes took me under the arms, and, running, dragged me over the island towards the prison. I had to leave all details till later. My one burning desire was first to rush to the place of my detention. And although I strove to remain outwardly calm, my heart was palpitating with my great excitement. The picture hidden by the fortress walls was

now before me. In front of me, in the middle of the courtyard paved with cobstones, I saw the white stone church ; to the right were the officers' houses, equally of stone ; in the western corner of the fortress, not far from the gates, rose a wooden building—the *manège* ; to the left of the gates, along the fortress walls, as far as the citadel, ran the long double-storied barracks for the officials of lower rank, together with a house chapel consecrated to St. Philip. Barracks of a similarly ancient type, only smaller, were also visible behind the officers' houses. The citadel or castle, and the prisons around the church, are situated in the eastern part of the island. Trees have been planted about the courtyard, and a large garden, surrounded by a wall, occupies the space between the *manège* and the habitation of the Commandant. One footpath leads from the gates of the Imperial tower to the entrance of the church, and the other to the houses of the officers, and farther on to the prison, whither we were chiefly directing our steps.

At the point where the church and the last building of the officers' houses meet, two fenced enclosures are seen on either side of the path. To the right is the so-called 'Brothers' Church-yard,' where the soldiers of the Preobraghensky and Semeonovsky Regiments, who fell on the occasion of the capture of the fortress (Noteburg)



THE CHURCH AND THE OFFICERS' HABITATIONS

on October 11, 1702, lie buried. To the left is the palisade in front of the white building for the soldiers on guard, or the guard-room. On both sides runs a brick wall, marking the boundary of the Imperial prison within the fortress. In a line with the guard-room are the iron gates, which I well remembered, for it was there that, in 1884, my chains were taken off.

The front of the sentry-house looks toward the church, and at the corner there is a wooden staircase with the following inscription: 'The rooms of the quartermaster and the administration.' Three windows farther on there is another door, leading into the prisoners' kitchen, and marked with the number 5. The front has six more windows. On the right side of the building, facing the 'Brothers' Churchyard,' there are four windows, and at the very gates of the prison there is a door with an inscription, 'The sentry-house,' with a striped hut by it. On the other side, facing the citadel, there is a wooden staircase, with the rooms of the Sub-Lieutenant.

We were at first invited to visit the interior of the guard-house. In a room with two doors facing one another, and the windows of which lead into the prison yard, we were shown a long bench, divided by high partitions into separate seats, where sat the soldiers on duty for the night, whilst their comrades were resting on the wide

benches against the opposite wall. Passing through this room, we entered a small vestibule, just in front of the door leading into the prison yard. Here another door leads from the kitchen; in it was a large flap that could be locked, and through which the prisoners' food was passed. In a corner, near the door, stood a large hearthstone, with two copper caldrons. All this was, of course, very interesting, but I was burning with impatience to visit my former habitation.

We at last entered the prison yard. In front of us, in a parallel line with the guard-room, ran the red brick building, in two stories, with its cellar and garret. Whilst the door was being unlocked, I managed to have a look at the front of the building. In the middle was a staircase with a wooden door painted yellow. I counted five windows in the first story to the left of the staircase, and six to the right. There were twelve windows in the second story, close under the roof, whilst six long, low windows looked out from the cellar. On the red roof there were two tall hot-water pipes and the bulls'-eyes of the garret.

This prison, known as the New one, as distinguished from the other situated within the walls of the citadel, and known as the Old one, is marked with the number 6.

‘Everything here,’ observed our guide, ‘used

to be numbered. Not only the buildings, but also the people.'

He opened the door, and we entered the ante-room, from which a large stone staircase led to the upper story. It occupied the space of three windows in each story. Just opposite the outer door was another double door of very small dimensions, one door of iron bars with two locks and a large bolt, and the other a wooden one.

Underneath the staircase we noticed another door leading into the cellar.

My heart beat heavily; I entered the half-lit corridor of the prison, full of boxes, books, and various works left by the freed prisoners.

On the boxes lay the skeleton of a man. It had been brought here, explained our guide, at the request of the prisoners, for the study of anatomy. A skull and bones at the prison entrance are an appropriate enough symbol. What did it signify at that moment? Was it the emblem of death triumphing within the walls of this terrible prison? or was it a sign of death conquered, and of the solemn resurrection of the prisoners from their living tomb? All the doors leading into the cells were wide open. One could enter and inspect any one of them. But I hastily went up the winding stairs at the right end of the corridor, and mounted to the second story, separated from

the first by a thick net of cord. Entering the iron balcony running along the upper cells on the eastern side, I stopped in front of the fourth cell from the end, under No. 23, and bared my head as if in front of a cathedral. I felt, at that moment, as though it had not been I who, twenty years ago, had been confined in this cell, but another human being superior to myself, and towards whom I ought to behave with reverence and respect.

I had scarcely crossed the threshold when, feeling almost suffocated in the narrow brick hole, I stood still, struck with amazement.

How often have I minutely described this cell and defined its dimensions; I myself thought once that it was possible to live within such a place, that somehow one could reconcile oneself to it. And now the reality struck horror into me and stupefied me. Why did this cell not appear to me so miserable, such a terrible hole, when I was brought hither for the first time? Or had I forgotten my first impressions? I think it can be explained thus: Having passed some time within the cells of the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, and in the prisons of preliminary confinement where I had been detained during my trial, I had evidently grown accustomed to these cages, and passing from one brick box into another, of larger or smaller dimensions, had become habitual to me.

And so that had been the last word of the prison experts: 3 cubic sazhen, and, taking off the corner cut off by bricks and the iron furniture, only a little more than 2.

Without any exaggeration, one could say that this hole was really a stone coffin, and a narrow one too. When the Schluesselburg fortress was being constructed I happened to notice that the architects, in designing the habitations for free people, had accorded 5 cubic sazhen to a man. But here, where prisoners were to be detained a number of years, the builder thought that a little over 2 sazhen was sufficient for the prisoner, his washing-stand and his bed.

The men of the elder generation who constructed the prison in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul were much more humane. In the Troubetzky bastion the cells are twice as large, if not more than twice as large, as those of Schluesselburg. Unable to stand the choking atmosphere in the cell, I hastened to leave. My wife, full of excitement, had managed to get before me, and had already penetrated to my cell. On entering it, she closed the door behind her, and, throwing herself on the bench, burst into tears.

I advise all prison experts to try to experience a similar feeling, and to pass at least one hour in such a cell.

XXIII

THE INMATES OF THE BASTILLE

‘And from on high we have been honoured with a mission !

We passed a severe school, but acquired higher knowledge.

Thanks to exile, prison, and a bitter lot,

We know and value the world of truth and freedom.’

The Prisoner of Schluesselburg.

REGAINING my equanimity, I again entered cell No. 23, and began to inspect it.

In the course of twenty years it had been changed for the better. The opaque window-panes, which were there in my time, had since been replaced by ordinary transparent glass. Instead of the paraffin lamp there was now electric light, although the iron hoop for holding the lamp was still visible near the table. Ventilators had been made in the inner wall, on both sides of the door. On the other hand, however, the two corners of the cell near the door had been cut off and filled with bricks, so as to prevent the prisoner from hiding from the eye of the gendarme. The closet had in consequence of this been brought nearer

to the table, and the space of the cell had been diminished by 2 cubic arsheen. A vertical stove had been placed by the door. The iron bedstead, the table, and the bench had remained unchanged.

The furniture of the cell, painted grey, struck me as very miserable. The short narrow bedstead was suitable only for a child.

‘How could such a giant as Loukashevitch find room in such a small bed?’ I asked our guide.

‘His legs protruded out of it more than half an arsheen.’

‘And no one ever thought of changing his bed or making it longer?’

The tall T. D. Loukashevitch must have found it even more unbearable to live in the narrow cell than his colleagues. But the chief amelioration of the cell consisted in its having ceased to be dark. One could see the sky and the platform above the wall where the sentries stood.

We visited all the cells in succession. Cell No. 1 was on the first story in the north-western corner—*i.e.*, on the left side of the entrance. The number was written over each cell in blue paint on a white ground. Over some cells there were also special inscriptions, in blue paint.

I was told that E. T. Minakov was in cell

No. 1 in 1884. At present the cell was serving as a work-room.

The next cell in the same row, No. 2, had been occupied by the late Ludwig Varynsky. It is now a joiner's workshop.

No. 3 had been occupied by M. N. Trigony, who had passed over seventeen years in Schluesselburg. He had been inscribed among the prisoners under No. 1.

One would have thought that the numbers would have been applied to the prisoners according to the order in which they had entered the fortress or in which they had been inscribed in the prison register, but the repetition of the numbers (Shtshedrin, for instance, and afterwards Karpovitsh, had the same No. 3) showed that the authorities availed themselves of numbers that had become vacant.

In the fourth cell, from 1886 to 1896, Yapovitsh had been confined (under No. 23). He had been transported to Siberia, where he put an end to his burdensome life by suicide.

In No. 5 M. P. Shebalin (No. 18) had lived from 1884 to 1896, until he had been sent to Siberia. This cell now bears the inscription: 'The Bureau of the Principal Assistant.' Next to this were the entrance-doors and the staircase, which, as I have pointed out, occupied the space of three cells.



MIKHAIL TRIGONI

Cell No. 6 in the same row was now changed into a work-room.

No. 7 contained a museum which had been formed—thanks to the labour of the prisoners. It bore the inscription ‘The Microscope Room.’ No. 8 was the work-room of Novoroussky, and No. 9 that of Loukashevitch. No. 9 finished this row of cells. On the opposite side of the corridor the numbers run from the southern end of the building to the northern.

In the south-eastern corner of the first story is cell No. 10, bearing the inscription ‘Library.’ Here the unhappy Gratshevsky had been detained before his transference to the Old Prison. The next cell in this row, No. 11, had been occupied by Vasily G. Ivanov (No. 13), who, in the course of his sojourn in Schluesselburg from 1888-1894, had also occupied another cell on the second floor, No. 32. Afterwards cell No. 11 served as the second half of the library.

In cell No. 12 Shtshedrin (No. 3) had been confined from 1884-1896. He went mad, and was taken thence to Kazan. This cell now bears the inscription of ‘Bookbinding Room.’ No. 13 had been inhabited by N. A. Morozov (No. 4). During his long sojourn in Schluesselburg, from 1884 to 1905, he had also occupied cells Nos. 15, 18, 33, and 38.

In No. 14 there was a bath-room. The next cell, as large as two, bore the inscription of 'Room of the Officer on Duty.'

In my time—*i.e.*, in the first days after the opening of the Schluesselburg prison—this large cell served for the reception by a committee of officers of the newly arrived prisoners. The reception was unpleasant, accompanied as it was by a search, already described, of the body of the prisoner by a medical inspector; and here the prisoner was clad in the prison garb. The room had formerly contained a bath, an oven, a bench, and a table. The bath was for the use of the prisoners, who took it in presence of the prison director and the gendarmes. Here also the prisoners had their hair and nails cut.

Cell No. 15 had been occupied by N. A. Morozov. Now it looked like a work-room.

No. 16 was an armoury.

No. 17 had been inhabited by M. P. Popov (No. 5), who came to Schluesselburg in 1884 and remained till 1905. He had also inhabited cell No. 27. No. 17 now bears the inscription of 'Bookbinding Room.'

Cell No. 18 was occupied for a short time by N. A. Morozov, whilst in No. 19 A. B. Boutzevitsh, and afterwards M. F. Lagovsky (No. 21), had been confined. The first remained there only from 1884 to 1885, and died of con-

sumption. The latter was brought there 'by administrative order,' and remained, instead of five, ten years (1885 to 1895).

Cells Nos. 18 and 19 now bear the inscription of 'Turner's Workshop.'

We had thus inspected the first floor, and passing to the other end of the corridor, we went up the winding staircase to the second floor.

The next row of cells runs from south to north along the eastern side of the building. The first cell by the winding staircase, No. 20, had been occupied by Boutzinsky, who died in prison; afterwards N. P. Starodvorsky passed a night in this cell.

Cell No. 21 had been occupied by the late S. Slatopolsky; it afterwards served as a work-room for V. N. Figner.

No. 22 was occupied by Pokhitonov (No. 15), who went mad within the walls of Schluesselburg, and is supposed to have died in the Nicholas Hospital in St. Petersburg. This same cell had also been occupied by B. Orzhikh (No. 32), who was brought to Schluesselburg in 1888.

Cell No. 23 had been occupied after me by P. V. Karpovitsh (No. 3 *bis*). He was one of the five prisoners who were the last to leave Schluesselburg on January 30, 1906.

Cell No. 24 had been occupied by the late

Y. N. Bogdanovitsh, who came to the fortress in 1884.

No. 25 had been occupied by V. S. Pankratov (registered under No. 20), who had been in Schluesselburg from 1884 to 1898. The last prisoner to occupy this cell was Melnikov.

The next cell had been inhabited by V. N. Figner (under No. 11), who was afterwards transferred to No. 39. She remained in Schluesselburg from 1884 to 1904—twenty years. Afterwards this cell was also occupied by M. B. Novoroussky (registered under No. 25), who had formerly been detained in No. 8 over seventeen years.

No. 27 was occupied by S. A. Ivanov (registered under No. 28), who had remained in prison from 1886 to 1905.

Cell No. 28 had at first been occupied by the late Arontshik (registered under No. 7), and afterwards by M. P. Popov.

No. 29 was occupied at first by Ivan L. Manoutsharov (No. 22), who passed ten years there, from 1885 to 1895, and afterwards by J. A. Gershouny (under No. 33).

Cell No. 30 had at first been occupied by I. N. Myshkin, and afterwards by P. S. Polivanov (under No. 9). Both were among the prisoners of the New Prison in 1884. Myshkin was soon after his arrival put to death within the prison walls (in January 1885), whilst Polivanov was

sent to Siberia in 1902, whence he escaped abroad. There he put an end to his sufferings.

Polivanov was also detained in No. 35. How tragic the fate of this man had been ! One may conceive the reason for the suicide of Martynov and Yanovitsh. They had borne all the terrors of the Schluesselburg confinement, hoping to find some relief in exile, but, finding the same unbearable conditions in Siberia, they decided to put an end to their lives. Polivanov, however, having struggled through the horrors of the Alexis ravelin and of Schluesselburg for twenty years, and having passed some time in Siberia, at last escaped abroad, and was free. He wrote a few interesting reminiscences, and then suddenly shot himself. To have stood all those horrors for a quarter of a century, and to regain freedom at last in a civilized land, only to end by shooting himself !

The last cell in the eastern row, No. 31, had been occupied by Karaoulov (under No. 24), who had been confined here from 1884 to 1888. It had also been occupied by T. D. Loukashevitch (under No. 26). The last mentioned remained in Schluesselburg from 1887 to 1905.

From this cell we crossed a narrow little bridge leading to the iron balcony which ran along the southern row of the cells. In the north-western corner of the prison the first cell was No. 32,

which had at first been inhabited by V. S. Ivanov, and afterwards by Sourovitzev (under No. 19). The latter remained in prison from 1884 to 1896.

The next cell, No. 33, had been occupied by N. A. Morozov and M. Th. Frolenko (under No. 2). They had both remained in Schluesselburg from the day the prison was opened until the end of 1905.

Cell No. 34 had been occupied by Madame L. A. Wolkenstein (No. 12), and afterwards by Kobylansky. Wolkenstein was afterwards transferred to No. 37, where she remained till she was set free in 1896, whilst Kobylansky died within the prison walls. The cell was in its last days occupied by S. A. Ivanov.

No. 35 had at first been occupied by P. S. Polivanov, and afterwards by G. A. Lopatin (under No. 27). The latter had remained in Schluesselburg from 1887 to 1905.

Cell No. 36 had been inhabited for many years by Michael Julianovitsh Ashenbrenner (under No. 14). During the first years of his confinement Ashenbrenner was detained in No. 40. Altogether, he had passed twenty years in the New Prison, from 1884 to 1904. After M. J. Ashenbrenner this cell was occupied by P. Vl. Karpovitsh.

Next to this cell is the stone staircase, and then follow the last four cells. No. 37 had

successively been occupied by L. A. Wolkenstein, B. Orzhikh, and N. P. Starodvorsky (under No. 29). The latter remained in Schluesselburg from 1887 to 1905. Cell No. 38 had been occupied by N. A. Morozov before his departure. In one of these two cells K. F. Martynov had also been detained from 1884 to 1896. He committed suicide in Siberia.

No. 39 had been inhabited by Th. Yourkovsky from 1884 to 1906, who died in prison. It had afterwards been occupied by V. N. Figner, and, after she had left, by P. L. Antonov.

The last cell, No. 40, had been occupied after Ashenbrenner by P. L. Antonov for two years (under No. 31). Antonov was transferred to No. 39, where he remained until he left the prison. Altogether, Antonov was twenty years (1885 to 1905) in Schluesselburg.

These last four cells, situated in the southwestern corner of the building, were considered the best in the whole prison, their windows looking into the prison yards, and through them the prisoner was, to some extent, able to watch the outside life.

They could not tell me where the other prisoners, who had since died, had been detained. They were : Isaev, Malevsky, Gellis, Dolgoushin, Klimenko, Ign. Ivanov, Tikhanovitsh, Nemolovsky, and Konoshevitch, who went mad. But

even the information I obtained concerning the previously mentioned prisoners required verification.

Noticing on the upper landing of the stone staircase a small side door, we were informed that it led to the garret. We went down to the door leading into the cellar. As there had been a suspicion of subterranean cells, I walked round the half-dark vault, carefully examining its walls. Down the centre, along the entire length of the cellar, ran a stone walling, just underneath the floor of the corridor. On both sides of it were two narrow paths ; they ran just under the arches upon which the cells are situated. All I noticed in the cellar were a stove and a heap of coke.

A great deal has been said about the underground passages of the Schluesselburg fortress. I asked the guide if he knew of any such on the island.

‘I have never personally investigated the matter,’ he answered ; ‘but I have heard that through the small door near the icon, in the passage leading through the Imperial tower, one can penetrate into the cellar, and thence into a subterranean passage. We have, however, no traditions as to whether the Swedes escaped from Noteburg through any passage of this kind when the fortress was taken by Peter the Great.

In any case, if such passages exist, they are undoubtedly within the precincts of the island, and not beyond. They say that Ivan Antonovitch visited the church of St. Philip by means of such a passage. But there was no necessity for his doing so, as one may easily reach the church from the corridors of the barracks.'

'But tell me, where are the punishment cells for the prisoners?'

'The cells of the Old Prison used to serve for that purpose. In the New Prison cell No. 19 probably served as a punishment cell. It is the only one which has a window with a shutter outside.'

On leaving the prison, we perceived a group of children on the staircase. They were warbling sweetly, as they picked up something on the steps.

'Look here,' I said to my companions, 'do not these children, under the windows of the prison, remind you of the pigeons that one sees round the prison van in the famous picture by Yaroshenko entitled "There is life everywhere"?''

XXIV

THE INMATES OF THE BASTILLE (*continued*)

‘ I heard a sad song from the castle’s deep,
And its plaintive notes made me weep.’

Zhukovsky.

THE entire yard of the New Prison, which runs along the old walls, is occupied with the gardens of the prisoners ; here also they take their recreation.

In my time—*i.e.*, from 1884 to 1886—near the southern wall of the citadel there was a rectangle, divided into six parts by wooden partitions. All the doors of these little yards led into the centre, where a sentry-box stood. Formerly there used to be nothing in these little cages except a heap of sand and a wooden spade. Later on, however, new rectangular cages were constructed, which we transformed into gardens. The number of these cages afterwards increased ; and out of the former six triangular cages were formed four larger ones, the fourth occupying an entire corner of the prison yard. Five other cages (Nos. 2 to 6) led from it to the stone staircase at the cross wall. A little farther towards the

Light Tower were two more gardens (Nos. 57 and 58). Alongside the cages, on the top of the common wall, there ran a platform for the gendarme on duty. All these cages, both the old and the new, had been transformed into flower- and fruit-gardens.

Traces of many years' labour were visible in all these gardens. In some there were fruit-trees, in some vegetables, and in others flowers. We entered one of these little gardens, where grew the flowers grown by the amateur gardener, Loukashevitch. The spring sun had brought forth some green leaves. We were offered, as a keepsake, some of the flowers from plants that had years before been put in by prisoners. In some of the partitions were hot-beds, in others storehouses; in one there was a smithy. In each cage there were paths paved with flagstones. Our attention was called to No. 6, where V. N. Figner used to work. It is said that in digging up the ground a number of Swedish coins were discovered. Did the Schluesselburg Museum care to keep even one of these coins dug up by the prisoners?

Our guide now invited us to proceed to the citadel where the Old Prison is situated.

We passed through the large gates, and found ourselves in a small square surrounded on all sides by high stone walls. The narrow, one-

storied building, No. 4, the Old Prison, divides the square into two unequal parts. The part nearer to the gates is called the large courtyard of the citadel, the other the small courtyard. Both are connected with terrible reminiscences. Since the opening of the prison in Schluesselburg in 1884, ten people have been put to death within the citadel. It was here that, on September 21, 1884, Minakov was shot; and on October 10, 1884, the naval lieutenant Baron Stromberg, and the artillery officer Rogatshev, were hanged. On January 26, 1885, J. N. Myshkin was shot. For some years after this no one was executed, but, to make up for lost time, on May 8, 1887, five students were hanged. They were: Oulyanov, Generalov, Andreyoushkin, Osypanov, and Shevyrev. Again for fifteen years no prisoner suffered death. But in 1902 Balmashev was brought to the Old Prison and shot (hanged?) on May 3, in the small courtyard where the gendarmes show his grave. He was the last of those who were executed within the citadel. Evidently in order that the inmates of the Old Prison might not be witnesses of the execution, the three last victims, Kalyaev, Vasilev, and Gershkovitsh, were hanged in a corner between the bath-room and the former bakery. The three last named were detained before their deaths in this building, No. 13, where afterwards

a shop and a kitchen for the subalterns were placed. The last two put to death in Schlues-selburg were Vasilev and Gershkovitsh. The first was executed in the joiners' work-room, which is in a line with the kitchen for the subalterns, and the second in the reception-room of the large barracks. A short while ago I heard some details of the horrible end of these two youths, which occurred on August 20, 1905. Alexander Vasilev, aged twenty, a poor working man, had shot a constable. He was sentenced to death, notwithstanding the prayers of his mother and the defence of his counsel. Trusting that the fact of his not yet being of age would be taken into consideration, Vasilev never expected that he would be executed. But he was told to prepare for death ; he grew terribly pale, and seemed to lose courage. He was visited, however, by an old clergyman, and after a conversation with the latter Vasilev grew calm, and, without any assistance, mounted the scaffold, made a bow to all round, and asked those present to forgive him and pray for his soul. These simple words spoken by the young man produced a deep impression upon the gendarmes who were present.

‘We felt ashamed,’ some of them said, ‘when the executioner threw the cord round the neck of the unhappy Vasilev. It seemed to us as if we

were participating in his death. We have often had occasion to witness the execution of a prisoner, but never did we feel so guilty as at the execution of this boy, this simple working youth.'

After Vasilev, the Jew Gershkovitsh, aged nineteen, was executed. This youth produced an even deeper impression by the courage with which he mounted the scaffold. Heaven grant that he may be the last one put to death in Schluesselburg, and may the soil of the island never again be stained with human blood!

After the execution of the five students the citadel was deserted from 1887 to 1901, and permission was granted to the prisoners detained in the New Prison to avail themselves of the courtyard and the cells of the Old. The hideous place of executions was soon changed by the prisoners into flower-gardens. Here they had hot-beds, greenhouses, flower-beds, fruit-bushes, and about ten apple- and pear-trees.

In the same courtyard they also arranged an ice-cellar and a shed. The three cells were used as various work-rooms, but when the new period of revolutionary struggle came, room had to be made in the Old Prison for new arrivals. The Old Prison is a narrow, one-storied building, running the entire length of the courtyard, and has the appearance of ancient stone offices. The prisoners, therefore, used to call it the shed. The

windows of various dimensions, and the chimneys of various descriptions on the roof, seem to indicate that the several parts of the building were constructed at different periods. The white walls, the old roof, the fir-trees and apple-trees in front of the building, give it a modest and not at all terrible appearance from the outside. But when one peeps through the iron grating at the windows, when one sees the massive bolts, and tries to imagine the thickness of the walls, then one easily understands that underneath that innocent aspect something terrible lies hidden. It is sufficient to enter one of the cells to feel at once the heavy mustiness and humidity of the chambers; there the shades of the tortured and executed prisoners still seem to hover.

The entrance-door is in the middle of the building. To the left are four windows and to the right six. On the roof are the three dormer windows of the garret.

We entered a small narrow corridor; a number of doors, open just then, led into it. Two of the cells at either end of the corridor were not in a line with the others, and looked as if they had been added afterwards. I counted eight cells in one row, with windows looking out upon the small courtyard. The windows of the corridor and of the two side cells opened on to the larger courtyard. The cells resembled those of the

New Prison, but were a trifle larger. Madame V. N. Figner and L. A. Wolkenstein usually occupied the two end cells, Nos. 1 and 10, and when the prisoners were working in the work-room of the Old Prison, they were allowed to talk with their friends through the aperture in the doors.

It was in the last cell to the right (No. 9), close to the wall, that Gratshevsky took his life by burning himself alive. The same cell had also been occupied by Gershouny, the other (No. 10) by Sikorsky. According to the information given by the gendarme, it was in one of the end cells (No. 1) that Mademoiselle S. M. Ginsburg cut short her days with a pair of scissors. No. 2 had been occupied by Tshepeguin, and No. 6 by Kotshoura. Sasonov and Sikorsky were the '*Last of the Mohicans*,' the Schluesselburg prison continuing quite empty after their departure on January 30, 1906.

How many prisoners have altogether been confined in Schluesselburg since 1884?—Sixty-six. Of these, thirty died within the prison walls, thirteen of whom were put to death. Of those who left it, many have already died, some have gone mad.

During the two or three days which I passed in the Old Prison in 1886, before my departure for Sakhalin, I was in such a state of excitement,

in expectation of the approaching change in my life, that I never thought of the position of the cells, and I do not remember in which of them I passed that interval of time; it may have been in the middle one. Even now I could see no numbers on the doors; those I have mentioned I gave according to the information I received from one of my fellow-prisoners.

‘How terrible it must have been for those prisoners,’ I observed to my companions, ‘who knew that they were immured within these walls for ever!’ They had lost all hope of freedom. I remember that when I was arrested I imagined that I should be set free after five or six weeks. Months, however, passed. I fixed a year. Several years passed, and I was then taken to the stone vault of Schluesselburg. I ceased trying to guess when I should be set free. Many of those who have been confined here could exclaim: ‘Years flitted by, but I did not count them.’ One of us, the officer M. F. Lagovsky, who had been sentenced to five years’ imprisonment by administrative order, with great difficulty succeeded in counting the days of his confinement. The day of his liberation was soon to come, when he was informed that his sentence had been doubled. ‘What use is there in counting under such circumstances?’

‘Not only the prisoners, but the Holy Virgin

herself, has been immured here for life,' observed our guide.

I looked at him. Was he joking? No; his face wore a calm and serious expression.

'Don't you know,' he continued, 'that the icon of the Holy Virgin from Kazan, supposed to be miracle-working, was built up by the inhabitants of Novgorod in the walls of the fortress church? During the hundred years that the town of Oreshok remained in Swedish possession no one knew anything of the holy image in the wall. But when, under Peter the Great, the fortress passed into Russian possession, the icon was discovered accidentally and freed from its hiding-place behind the plaster.'

'Why do you say accidentally?'

'Because in the course of a century the Russians had entirely forgotten about the holy icon; it was, however, observed that a certain spot in the stone wall above the altar was always damp, and that the plaster fell away from it. A crack came in the wall, and this ultimately led to the discovery of the icon.'

'I can tell you one thing: Your story of the holy icon is a very good symbol of the martyrs who, during the last centuries, have been buried alive within these walls.'

XXV

THE EMPEROR IVAN ANTONOVITSH

‘A child was born. He committed consciously neither bad nor good actions. He fell ill, suffered much and long, until he died in terrible agony. Why? Wherefore? It is the eternal riddle for the philosopher.’

* * *

‘FROM here we can pass into the “stone sack” of the Light Tower, where the Emperor Ivan Antonovitsh was kept prisoner,’ said our guide.

We proceeded to the left corner of the corridor, and then through a narrow passage between the cells 1 and 2. We reached the guard-room, the comparatively large two windows of which looked out upon the front courtyard. Two doors led from the guard-room—one to the right into a very small bath-room, with a window upon the small courtyard; one to the left into a small ante-room, with an exit upon the same small courtyard. From this ante-room a very old trodden-down stone staircase of about eight steps led to the ‘stone sack’ of Ivan Antonovitsh.

Involuntarily we stopped for a moment in the

ante-room in front of the historical cell. How many terrible reminiscences were attached to it !

Our guide entered first, and in the feeble light of one window to the right of the door began attentively to scan our faces, anxious to see what impression it made upon us. The small cell was, nevertheless, considerably larger than the stone graves of the New Prison. In spite of the low ceiling, it measured 5 cubic sazhen, instead of the little over 2 sazhen, which the New Prison experts found sufficient. Those of the older generation were a little more humane than the moderns. The arched walls were white. The floor was inlaid with square stones well worn by footsteps. The embrasure of the low window, with the iron network over it, was cut irregularly and roughly. At one end of the cell there used to be, according to tradition, a partition, behind which Ivan was placed while his terrible little bed was being made. The partition no longer exists, but traces of it remain in two iron hooks in the wall. Near the entrance, to the left is a stove originally covered with Dutch tiles. But some one seems to have taken a fancy to the Dutch tiles, and now only naked bricks are visible.

I looked through the dirty window. It looked across the small courtyard in a north-easterly direction, so that the sun could never shine into the room.

Consulting the documents relating to the detention of Ivan Antonovitsh in Schluesselburg, one becomes convinced that he was killed within the citadel—*i.e.*, in that very corner where the Light Tower stands—but it is somewhat difficult to reconcile certain passages concerning his imprisonment with the position of the ‘stone sack’ at the present day.

From the instructions issued by A. Ivan Shouvalov, one gathers that Ivan Antonovitsh was imprisoned, not in the tower, but in the barracks, where his guards were also stationed. This statement is corroborated by the report of the jailer, Captain Outzyn, who wrote in May, 1759, as follows :

‘ If any one of the soldiers turns on his couch or stretches his leg, he (I mean Antonovitsh) grows angry. Once he went up to the sub-officer with the intention of beating him ; he asked me to take him away, and said that if I did not he would beat him. If a sentry made a noise in the ante-room or in the gallery, he also grew angry.’

In another report, dated June, he again wrote :

‘ He (Ivan Antonovitsh) sat down on the window-sill ; I was afraid lest he should break the glass and throw himself out.’

The window evidently had no iron grating at that time ; at present an antiquated iron grating of rough workmanship still protects the window

of the 'stone sack.' It is also incomprehensible how Ivan Antonovitsh could possibly hear the noise made by the soldiers, or how he could go up to the sub-officer, if he was being kept under lock and key in the 'stone sack.' Altogether, an inspection of this 'stone sack' gives rise to many questions as to the habitation of the Imperial prisoner.

What a strange fate was that of this unhappy Emperor, whom his contemporaries called Ivan III. (see coins of 1740 and 1741), but whom we count as Ivan VI.! When two months old, on October 17, 1740, he was proclaimed Emperor of Russia, and was considered as such for four hundred and four days, until November 25, 1741. Elizabeth Petrovna, having first personally arrested the Regent, Anna Leopoldovna, took the latter's son, the baby Emperor, away with her in her sledge. On the way the 'hurrahing' of the crowd amused the baby, who began to jump and wave his little hands. 'Poor thing!' said Elizabeth, moved, 'you little know that these shouts are depriving you of your crown.' The baby Emperor, together with his parents, was at first (December 12, 1741) ordered to be taken abroad. But on January 9, 1742, they were stopped on their journey and imprisoned in the citadel at Riga. Here they remained only a short time. Towards the end of the year,

on December 13, the unhappy Brunswick family was transferred to the fortress of Dunamunde, where they remained a little over a year, being sent in 1744 to Ranenburg, in the province of Ryazan.

But even in Central Russia they found no rest. Towards the end of the summer of 1744, Baron N. A. Korff received the order to transfer the whole family to the Solovetzky monastery. The Baron, pitying the infant (Anna Leopoldovna had, at that time, besides her son Ivan Antonovitsh, two daughters, Catherine and Elizabeth), paid the family all possible attention on the way. He was even so bold as to take steps with a view to obtaining permission not to take the prisoners to the Solovetzky monastery. But his endeavours proved futile. The bad weather and the bad roads, however, compelled them to remain the winter in Kholmogory, whereupon the Empress consented to the family remaining there for the remainder of their lives.

This continual transport of the unhappy family from one corner of Russia to another is explained by the wish of the Government to keep the nation in ignorance as to the exact hiding-place of the dethroned Emperor. But he was not left in peace even in Kholmogory. The youthful Emperor still made the Empress feel uneasy, and he was, therefore, in 1756, brought to Schluesselburg.

On February 27, 1746, the former Regent,

Anna Leopoldovna, gave birth to a fifth child, Alexis, and soon afterwards died of puerperal fever. Thus her first-born child, the Emperor Ivan Antonovitsh, was deprived in his sixth year of his mother, and soon afterwards of his father and his entire family. Although he lived under the same roof with his father in Kholmogory, he was kept in a state of isolation. Father and son were not allowed to see each other. Ivan Antonovitsh remained in Kholmogory about twelve years. We have no documents as to who looked after his education during this period, or whether he was given any education at all. J. P. Danilevsky, has, however, succeeded in discovering a document of great importance. It is known as the 'List of Service' of the Schluesselburg fortress. He found there the exact date when the Prince Ivan Antonovitsh, of Brunswick-Lunneburg, was brought to Schluesselburg (1756). The royal youth was then sixteen years old. In this same document, under the date of 1762, Danilevsky found the following note made by the Commandant: 'On March 18, 1762, the Emperor, Peter III., graciously visited the fortress.'

There is a famous picture representing two Russian Emperors in the Schluesselburg fortress—two representatives of two hostile branches of the reigning dynasty. One is a great-grandson of

Ivan, born of Maria Miloslavskaya, the other is a grandson of Peter I., the son of Natalia Naryshkina. The struggle between the Miloslavskies and the Naryshkins, which began with the famous revolt of the regiment of archers on May 15, 1682, was carried on between Anna Leopoldovna and Elizabeth Petrovna. The Empress Elizabeth kept the unhappy Ivan Antonovitsh, the descendant of Ivan I., in confinement during her entire reign ; and in order to strengthen the succession to the throne in her own line, she brought over to Russia Karl Ulrich, Prince of Holstein. And now this Prince, as Peter III., was visiting his rival in the fortress of Schluesselburg !

The Emperor was accompanied by his favourite Adjutant-General, Baron Karl Karlovitsh Ungern-Sternberg ; by the General Prefect of the Police of St. Petersburg, the kindly old Nicholas Andreevitsh Korff ; by the dandy Grand Master of the Horse, Leo Alexandrovitsh Naryshkin ; and by the Private Imperial Secretary, Dimitry Vasilyevitsh Volkov. They noticed that the only window, being covered by a pile of wood stacked outside, gave very little light to the cell, which was about 10 arsheen long and 5 wide. Both his bed and his dress were kept in good order by Ivan Antonovitsh. The visitors noticed this, and were also struck by the extra-

ordinary whiteness of his skin. Peter III. asking Ivan Antonovitsh why he imagined himself to be the Emperor, and who had inspired him with such an idea, the latter replied that he knew it from his parents and from the soldiers. It is reported that in the course of the conversation the Emperor made mention of N. A. Korff having been ordered to transfer the Brunswick family from the province of Ryazan to that of Archangelsk. At this reminiscence the old Korff, who was present, burst into tears.

When the Emperor authorized him to ask a favour, Ivan Antonovitsh, it is said, timidly and perhaps proudly asked, like Diogenes petitioning Alexander the Great, for a little more sun and more air.

This visit to his relative in prison produced a deep impression upon Peter III. He decided to release him, and at the same time, with a view to marrying the Countess Voronzov, he made up his mind to divorce the Empress Catherine, and send mother and son to Schluesselburg for life. A Manifesto had already been prepared, but on the eve of its promulgation a sudden change took place. The rooms that had been prepared for Catherine and her son in Schluesselburg are still shown.

It is difficult to say at present to which building the writer was referring.

After the revolution, which took place June 28 to 30, 1762, Peter III. was taken to Ropsha, with a view to confining him in Schluesselburg. Catherine II. herself informed Ponyatovsky of this circumstance. After that, the fortress of Schluesselburg served as the prison wherein the dethroned rulers of the Russian Empire were confined. Anna Leopoldovna, in the name of the Emperor Ivan Antonovitsh, sent the Regent Biron to Schluesselburg, and Elizabeth in her turn sent Ivan Antonovitsh there. Peter III. was preparing to incarcerate his wife Catherine at the moment that the latter was ordering suitable rooms for her husband in the same fortress. The only question at issue was, 'Which of the two would forestall the other?'

Immediately after her accession Catherine gave orders to transfer Ivan Antonovitsh from Schluesselburg to Kexholm, to prepare the best rooms in the citadel of Schluesselburg, and to furnish them as well as possible. 'Evidently these rooms were destined for Peter Theodorovitsh,' says the historian, A. Brueckner.

Ivan Antonovitsh was transferred to Kexholm, but immediately after the death of Peter III. he was brought back to Schluesselburg.

The fates of these two Russian Emperors, these two German Princes, Ivan VI. and Peter III., were closely allied. Both ruled a short time,

and both were dethroned by women. Peter visited Ivan in Schluesselburg and made up his mind to set him free, but four months had scarcely passed when he himself was on the point of being sent to Schluesselburg. Only death deprived the fortress of the honour of harbouring a second Imperial prisoner. Their fates were akin even in death. Both were killed on the same day of the same month, July 5, one just two years after the death of the other.

Some students of Russian history maintain that the Empress Catherine II. also took an interest in the 'unhappily born' boy, as she called Ivan Antonovitsh, and that she wished to see him and convince herself that he was no dangerous pretender to the Russian throne. But when, where, and under what circumstances did this interview take place? These are so many questions which require a more detailed answer than can be given at present, and weightier proofs are wanting of the fact that any interview took place at all.

With regard to the mental development and education of Ivan Antonovitsh, opinions differ. His attendant, Captain Ovtzyn, was continually doubting whether he was really insane or was only pretending. 'I fear to do wrong if I do not report that he is insane, and yet I doubt it,

for he talks sense about everything, quoting from the New Testament, the Apostles, and other books, giving references to the passages and the lives of the saints where the quotations are to be found.'

Among the people, however, who were unaware of the exact place of Ivan Antonovitsh's confinement, rumours of a quite different kind were circulated. 'People talked of his beauty and amiability, of his talents, of the moral strength with which he bore his fate, and of the lucid manner in which he reflected upon his position.'

One thing, however, is certain. In his solitary confinement Ivan Antonovitsh turned mystic and prayed a great deal. Ovtzyn further reports: 'When I talked to him, telling him that it was useless to grow angry, that he was only sinning against God and doing himself much harm, he used to reply: "Were I among the monks in the monastery I should never grow angry; there are no heretics there." He often laughed, but only very secretly.' Others who had been about Ivan Antonovitsh spoke as follows after his death:

He was continually putting questions to himself and answering them, uttering the while such strange words that it was difficult to imagine what he said. He was, he would declare, of a different and superior mettle; his body was that

of Prince Ivan, who had been destined to be Emperor of Russia, but he had already long ago left this world; in reality, however, he was a heavenly spirit—namely, the Holy Gregory, who had only assumed the shape and body of Ivan. He told us that he often went up to heaven, and that our words and the breath we exhaled were impure and fiery; he called us heretics, and blamed us because we manifested our cowardice and worthlessness in bowing to the holy icon, just as we bowed to one another; the heavenly spirits, to whose number he belonged, bowed to no one. Having passed his childhood among soldiers and officers, his education necessarily remained very poor. He was, moreover, tongue-tied, and often by his conduct gave occasion for the suspicion of insanity.

In January 1762, Prince Tshourmantev, Captain of the Guards, the keeper of Ivan Antonovitsh, received the following order: ‘Should anyone dare to attempt to deliver the prisoner and take him from you against our order, you are to oppose such attempt with all your power, and not allow him to be taken alive. Under Catherine II. the new keepers, the officers Vlashev and Tshekin, received a similar order from Count Panin, who also commanded them to change the prisoner’s name

from Gregory (by which he had been known since 1744) to that of Gervasy.

The cruel order of 1762 was soon executed. In July, 1764, Vasily Jacovlevitsh Mirovitsh, Sub-Lieutenant of the Smolensky regiment of infantry, was on weekly duty in Schluesselburg. At dawn one day he roused the guards and led them to the citadel, with the intention of releasing the former Emperor Ivan Antonovitsh. The two keepers, however, hastened to execute the murderous instructions they had received, and, throwing themselves upon their unhappy prisoner, killed him.

Thus perished this wretched Emperor, in the twenty-fourth year of his terrible life. For one year, he had been considered Emperor, but the other twenty-three years he passed in confinement, and eight of these in the Schluesselburg fortress.

XXVI

POLITICAL CRIMINALS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

‘Can I describe my feelings at this time? Those of a Christian martyr, ready to bear everything with the mildness of the lamb; those of a fierce panther in its cage, hurling itself against the bars with breast and claws, trying to tear its way to freedom.’—V. N. FIGNER.

THERE was no passage leading from the stone ‘sack’ of Ivan Antonovitsh, either to the upper cell under the roof, or to the cellar. We had to go out again by the large courtyard, and thence into the tower by a special entrance.

Passing through the Old Prison, we looked into the back-yard. It was divided by a wooden wall into two parts, so as to enable two prisoners to walk about there at the same time. They were led out in turns. First one was led through the narrow door in the wall into the farther half, situated near the Royal Tower, where the grave of the executed Balmashev is shown; then the second prisoner was led into the front portion of the courtyard. Reaching the large courtyard on the other side of the prison, our guide asked us to

wait a few minutes, until he had fetched a candle and matches. Whilst waiting for him we wandered about the place. Some of us inspected the fruit-trees, planted in rows; others began digging among the heaped-up mould. Some one found an earthen sublimatory with two necks. I turned my attention to the arches of the two gates. The arch over the old gates, now closed, not far from the Light Tower, was of stone, whilst that over the new gates recently constructed was of brick. This distinction is the best indication of the respective ages of the gates. Through the gates now closed used to pass, not the canal itself, as some explain—this ran round the wall of the citadel—but a passage under a bridge which spanned it. One of our fellow-visitors started to draw the front of the Old Prison.

What a number of chimneys for so small a building! They showed how much fuel had to be wasted here to combat the cold and damp within the stone walls.

Our guide now appeared, inviting us to follow him to the upper part of the Light Tower. We approached the wooden doors at the left end of the Old Prison. When the doors were opened all we saw in front of us was a stone staircase, to the right of which was the prison building, and to the left the continuation of the wall of the citadel. ‘Please to proceed carefully,’ our guide

warned us, holding a light above the much-used stairs. I counted about two dozen steps, and then found myself on a small landing. The staircase continued in the same direction up to the roof. To the right was a small door leading to the garret. Just under the roof on the right side of the staircase were visible the outlines of windows, which formerly looked out over the Old Prison, but were now bricked up. They either served to light the staircase or one of the rooms which must have existed at the top of the tower. From the landing we passed to the left into a small ante-room, and thence into Biron's room, as it is called. Just facing the door were three windows, also bricked up, through which, once upon a time, one could see the Neva running below. The boards of the floor were rotten, and many had disappeared, so that it was dangerous and difficult to walk about. The roof of the tower served as ceiling.

From this room a door opened on to a staircase which led somewhere underneath. I went down a few steps, but was compelled to stop. What was there below? Who knows? But what is more curious still, none of the inhabitants had felt interested enough to explore these historical secret cells. Whenever some one did go down into the subterranean vaults, it was with the idea of finding a jug full of money. There were

many rumours current among the inmates of Schluesselburg about a hidden treasure. Biron's room was considerably larger than Ivan Antonovitch's stone 'sack,' and, had the windows been opened, would have been very much like an ordinary garret.

Tradition connects this room with the memory of many famous prisoners of the eighteenth century. Without wishing to contradict these traditions, I could not help thinking, 'Suppose only one tower had remained of the entire Schluesselburg fortress, would not all the prisoners detained here during the course of two centuries have been reported as connected with this one spot?' The guides will give you a whole list of persons whose presence in Schluesselburg no one ever suspected, beginning with the famous Prince Regent, A. D. Menshikov, and finishing with Karakozov.

There is no doubt, however, that the Duke of Courland, immediately after his arrest on November 8, 1740, was taken, with his whole family, by order of the new Regent Anna Leopoldovna, to Schluesselburg, where he remained till July, 1741, when his trial took place. The Senate condemned the former Regent of the Russian Empire to death, but Anna Leopoldovna commuted his sentence to that of exile to the town of Pelym in Siberia.

Biron is supposed to have been imprisoned in the upper cell of the Light Tower. If, at that period, only one tower existed in the interior of the citadel, this supposition is possibly correct.

About this period, in 1739, were also brought to Schluesselburg from Berezov the exiled Prince Ivan Alexeievitsh Dolgoroukov, and his uncles, the Princes Sergius and Ivan Gregorevitsh, and Vasily Loukitsh Dolgoroukov. All of them were tortured and executed on November 8, 1739. Tradition is silent as to the exact place at Schluesselburg in which they were imprisoned.

It is worthy of notice that just a year later, on the fatal 8th of November, the instigator of their tortures and executions, Duke Biron, was himself arrested and thrown into the same fortress.

In the history of the eighteenth century we further come across passages like the following :

‘In 1771 a certain merchant, Alexius Smolin, addressed a letter to the Empress Catherine, in which he reproached her with having confiscated the Crown properties, which he considered an unworthy act. By order of the Empress, Smolin was sent to Schluesselburg for five years.’

Nicholas Ivanovitsh Novicov, the noble champion of enlightenment, imprisoned by

Catherine in 1792 for fifteen years, is also supposed to have languished in Ivan Antonovitsh's stone 'sack.' After the death of Catherine in 1796, Paul liberated Novicov.

Novicov's contemporary, the officer Theodor Kretshetov, was also sentenced and imprisoned in Schluesselburg for his projects concerning Imperial reforms. Soon afterwards he was again tried for a manuscript found in his possession, in which the following passage occurred: 'It would be very wise to recognize Jesus Christ as the Monarch of the whole world, and to base a code of laws upon His teachings.' By order of the Empress, December 25, 1794, Theodor Kretshetov was brought to Schluesselburg, and placed in cell No. 5 in the upper story, where he was very closely guarded for six years, till the accession of Alexander I. in 1801.

The mention of the upper story leads to the supposition that Kretshetov was detained in one of the barrack casemates of the fortress.

Besides these 'political criminals,' a large number of religious criminals languished in Schluesselburg, for the particulars of whose existence we lack data. It is well known, for instance, that Alexander Ivanovitsh Shilov, a follower of Condraty Selivanov, died in Schluesselburg on the eve of November 6, 1799.

During the reign of the Emperor Nicholas I.,

an exceptional number of religious offenders were imprisoned in Schluesselburg. The Raskolniks were thrown into prison there for the merest trifles. Of the Decembrists, the two brothers Bestyouzhev, Nicholas and Michael Alexandrovitsh, were imprisoned in the fortress of Schluesselburg. The famous revolutionary champion, Michael Alexandrovitsh Bacunin, also paid his tribute to our Castle of Chillon from 1854 to 1857. The following are, among others, supposed to have been confined in Schluesselburg: Karazin, the founder of the Kharkov University; Count F. Raevsky, Sokolovsky, Tyourin, Vasily Kritsky, Iboev, Oleynitshouk, and many others of whom we know but little. The secrets of Schluesselburg are, however, gradually coming to light, and it is to be hoped that we shall soon be in possession of a full list of all who were there martyred for an idea.

Only recently the name of Semeon Nikititsh Oleynitshouk has been brought to light. He was a freed serf, and after completing a course of education at the Gymnasium, he exercised for some time the profession of teacher, and then set out tramping, until he was arrested for seditious views expressed in his manuscripts. Oleynitshouk, who was intimately acquainted with Little Russian life, felt indignant at the horrors of serfdom. He was therefore, by order of the Government,

brought to Schluesselburg on December 17, 1849, where he died on July 27, 1852, in his fifty-fourth year.

From the official correspondence we learn that the prisoners at that period were confined 'in a secret castle' of the fortress. While inspecting the Schluesselburg fortress, we came across an old inhabitant who still called the citadel 'a secret place.' The more important prisoners (among whom Oleynitshouk was counted one, under No. 11) were confined in the citadel, whilst the others were kept in the two still existing barracks (Nos. 8, 15, and 7) which are attached to the north-western and south-eastern walls.

In 1869 the Schluesselburg prison for political and religious criminals was converted into a military convict colony.

In 1879 another change took place, and the military convict colony was turned into a disciplinary battalion. But three years had scarcely elapsed when it was decided to return to the old régime—*i.e.*, to imprison the more important political prisoners in Schluesselburg.

Looking back at the past of Schluesselburg, we find that the fortress had served in succession as prison for Imperial rulers and other high personages; then for various political and religious prisoners; afterwards for military convicts; and, lastly, for soldiers guilty of petty crimes. In the

course of a century and a half the importance of the fortress was continually on the wane.

In 1884 the importance of the political prison at Schluesselburg was revived. A new building, with narrow cells for forty men, was erected, a superintendent of the prison was appointed, and officers, as well as over a hundred soldiers, were placed under his orders. A yearly sum of 80,000 roubles was fixed for the maintenance of the prison, and, finally, about fifty select political prisoners—which number, however, was soon reduced to twenty—were brought thither from all parts of Russia.

Outwardly the prison had the appearance of a peaceful monastery. There were the impressive silence of the anchorites in their cells, the soft tread along the corridors of the serving gendarmes, the importance of the rarely to be seen Prior-Commandant. There were also the chief assistants, the treasurer, the sexton, and the cellarist—all in officers' uniforms. But only outwardly was it an abode of peace; in reality the jailers turned it into a horrible menagerie.

Observe what happened there during the first years, from 1884 to 1886. In every cell of the prison the prisoners, like freedom-loving beasts in iron cages, were pacing from corner to corner, over a space of four or five steps, until they fell exhausted. Human beings were hopelessly

struggling to get away from within the suffocating walls; they were endeavouring to exhaust their physical strength, so as to drown the excited working of their brains. But it was of no avail. An epidemic of insanity broke out. Some courted death, others threw themselves upon the soldiers, with the intention of thus forcing the authorities to execute them. When an officer visited any of the cells he was always preceded by two soldiers, who placed themselves on both sides of the prisoner, ready to seize him by the throat at the slightest suspicious movement. Only then did the officer dare to enter the cell, as if it were a wild beast's cage!

The authorities and administrators of the fortress naturally found no great pleasure in the worry and trouble occasioned by the care they had to take of these terrible prisoners. Since this political prison has been done away with, the authorities have been trying their best to have another place of detention constructed on the island for criminals sentenced to death. These give no such trouble.

A commission of officials from the prison department of State has already, it seems, visited the island, and decided that it would be possible to construct a place of the kind which would house about one thousand men.

Will this plan really be carried out? Will this

island, on which not only Russian Emperors and famous Princes, but also martyrs for political and religious truth, have suffered and shed their blood be really turned into a prison for the scum of society, for all the cut-throats and low criminals in Russia? Is it possible that, now that Sakhalin has been ceded to the Japanese, a new 'Sakhalin' will be established in the heart of the country, at a distance of only 30 versts from the capital?

Would it be possible to allow a thousand murderers, burglars, robbers, men convicted of arson, and other low criminals, to degrade this little island, which the sacred memory of many innocent martyrs has made dear to the Russian nation? Tell any Russian peasant about the Schluesselburg prisoners, beginning with the Emperor Ivan Antonovitsh, and he will invariably reply: 'They should rather build a monastery there, but certainly not a prison.'

XXVII

THE CITADEL

‘The noblest have fallen. They were buried obscurely in a deserted place.

‘No tears fell over them.

‘Strange hands carried them to the grave.

‘No cross, no enclosure, and no tombstone tell their glorious names.

‘Grass grows over them; a feeble blade bending low keeps the secret. The sole witnesses were the surging waves, which furiously beat against the shore. But even they, the mighty waves, could not carry farewell greetings to the distant home.’—V. N. FIGNER.

IN order better to understand the construction of the fortress, we were invited to ascend the tower, from which one can overlook all the surrounding buildings.

We mounted by a stone staircase leading from the courtyard to the summit of the eastern wall, where, on the one side, we had a splendid view over the Ladoga Sea, and on the other over the prison courtyard. I find it necessary here to interrupt my story; of the prison for a time, and give a short description of the fortress itself.

It will then be easier to give the necessary indications in regard to the localization of the various buildings and the historical tower where famous prisoners languished in the eighteenth century.

The River Neva forms part of the large waterway 'from the Varangians to the Greeks,' and has therefore enjoyed from the oldest times a considerable importance from a commercial point of view. For some time it was the disputed frontier of the two kingdoms. In the fourteenth century the Swedes took possession of the mouth of the Neva, and constructed in 1390, where the Okhta falls into it, a town named Landskron (Crown of the Earth); it is now swallowed up by St. Petersburg. The Russians meanwhile took possession of the head of the River Neva, and in 1323 constructed on the low, sandy island a town called Oreshok. The Chronicles of Novgorod relate as follows: 'The Novgorodians went with their Prince Youryi and built a town at the mouth of the Neva, on the island of Orekh. Hither also came the ambassadors from the Swedish King to conclude an eternal peace with the Prince and the new town, agreeing to pay the former tribute.' The Swedes made several attempts to take away Oreshok from the Russians, and often succeeded in doing so, but only for a short time. In 1353 the Novgorodians

‘put a stone round Orekhov’—*i.e.*, they replaced the wooden walls by a stone fortress, and, in consequence of a big fire in 1410, renewed the stone wall. The Swedes again endeavoured to take possession of the town in the sixteenth century, but failed. At last, during the ‘troubled times,’ the northern possessions, including Oreshok, passed by treaty to the Swedes. They changed the name of the town into that of Noteburg, and it remained in their possession until Peter the Great, with the aid of his Guards, in 1702, regained this ancient Russian fortress.

The first victory on the banks of the Neva so greatly pleased Peter the Great that he had a special coin struck in memory of it, with the following inscription: ‘Remained in the possession of the enemy for ninety years.’ A thanksgiving service was ordered to be celebrated in future on the anniversary of the day. As to the walls and towers of the fortress Noteburg at that period, we can judge of these from an engraving dating from the seventeenth century, to be found in the ‘Travels of Olearius’; with the engraving there is a plan of the fortress and its seven towers. Another engraving (dating from the eighteenth century) is to be found in the work of Marsius; and if we compare the ancient views of the Swedish fortress with the contemporary Schluesselburg, we see that at present the walls

and the towers are lower than they used to be, having been deprived of their battlements. Formerly there were also towers within the fortress, probably at the corners of the citadel.

During the siege the south-western corner was broken through in three places by the Russian artillery, but Peter the Great had it repaired immediately after its capture. He personally helped in the work, remaining on the banks of the Neva till December. On March 19 Peter returned to Schluesselburg, where he remained till April, and again visited the fortress on July 15. Peter often paid a visit to his key-town, and he had its walls surrounded by a low rampart of earth with bastions. The plan of the fortress has evidently been little changed since ancient times. The walls form a lengthened triangle, its base turned in the direction of the Ladoga Sea, and its point to the Neva.

The dimensions of the island are very small; it is 170 sazhen long, and less than 100 wide. The village Sheremetyevka is situated nearer the southern bank than the northern.

In Turkey the famous castle of the Seven Hills was the bastille of the country; in the Russia of the eighteenth century Schluesselburg was literally a second castle of the Seven Hills. But of all its towers, only five outer and one inner now remain.

The chief tower, through which the fortress is entered, is known as the 'Royal Tower.' It is inscribed in the register of buildings on the island under No. 17. The next tower is the round one. It is situated on the western side of the island at the point of the triangle. On the southern side of the fortress, facing the town, one tower still remains, the Golovkin Tower. The base of the triangle facing east, towards the Ladoga Sea, is known as the Cross wall. Its southern corner touches the Flag Tower; the northern the Royal Tower. The Flag Tower is now known as the Light Tower, the electric-light works being placed there. On a certain spot near the river-bank, within the Royal Tower, at the north corner of the fortress, hidden from the town, are the graves of several executed prisoners. Altogether, this north corner of the island is its most horrible part, here being situated the citadel with the terrible Old Prison, here also being the place where prisoners were executed and buried.

The towers of Schluesselburg were named either after their architects, or in honour of Peter's fellow-champions. The bastions of the new fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul were erected almost at the same time, and these were named—after the people who superintended the work—the Imperial bastion, the Menshikov, the

Naryshkin, the Troubetzkoy, the Sotov, and the Golovkin bastions.

Besides the above-mentioned five towers, there were two towers inside—the Bell Tower, turned afterwards into a steeple, whence its name ; and the Light, or Prince's, Tower. This tower evidently contained dwelling-rooms in ancient times, and a small room for the prince at the top. Only one of these two towers has remained, the Light Tower (No. 22), with its terrible stone 'sack,' where the unhappy Emperor Ivan Antonovitch languished till death. The second, the Bell Tower, was destroyed at the beginning of last century ; traces of it are still visible between the Imperial and the Royal Towers. The bastion round the second tower still remains.

In 1737 a plan was worked out, under the supervision of the excellent engineer Minikh, who had constructed the Ladoga Canal, to reconstruct the antiquated earthen walls of the Schluesselburg fortress ; the plan, however, was executed only at a later period, between 1750 and 1780.

The shores of the island around the towers are now raised by means of stone jetties running into the sea, which are lower along the walls of the fortress. They are wider where they meet the centre of the walls, and are edged at the extremities by cobble-stones.

The Schluesselburg fortress was again reconstructed in 1808, under Alexander I.—probably in view of a war with the Swedes. The towers were lowered by taking off the upper part and the battlements, and at the same time batteries were raised and embrasures made in the walls. At the close of the Swedish War in 1810, the fortress was again disarmed, and henceforward served only as a prison castle.

In the Geographical and Statistical Dictionary of the Russian Empire by N. Semenov, the height of the fortress wall is given as $6\frac{1}{2}$ to 7 sazhen, and its width as $2\frac{1}{2}$, whilst the outer earthen rampart is not more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 sazhen high.

The ancient citadel still stands at the north-eastern corner of the fortress; it is a small square surrounded by high walls. On the north side the corners are formed by the Royal and Light Towers, whilst the south wall of the citadel, forming a rectangle with the Cross wall, separates the Old Prison from the New. A gate has now been made through the wall, being the only entrance leading into the citadel. In ancient times, as can be seen from the plan of the Swedish fortress Noteburg in the seventeenth century (see ‘The Travels of Olearius’), an inner moat surrounded the citadel on the west and south sides. A drawbridge led over it to the now closed gates

in the western wall. Thanks to the special manner in which the stones had been placed, the place is even now recognizable. To judge from the ancient engravings of the plan, there were also towers on the remaining two corners of the citadel, but only the traces of one on the southwest corner remain. A pole for the electric lantern has now been placed on it. Some gendarmes maintain that the stone staircase is still to be seen, whilst others think the remains are those of an ancient Swedish church.

The citadel, this fortress within a fortress, was evidently chiefly used to harbour important prisoners. Its dimensions, however, are so insignificant that, in 1882, it was decided to enlarge the space of the prison and to prolong the western wall of the citadel as far as the 'Brothers' Graves' in a parallel line with the Poperetshna wall. The new brick edifice is considerably lower than the old walls, its farther end joining the Poperetshna wall near the Light Tower.

'May we traverse the courtyard of the fortress and inspect the buildings?' we asked our guide.

'If you please, you may now walk wherever you like.'

We first went towards the 'Brothers' Graves.'

'Did not the prisoners make these little columns of the railings?' asked one of us.

‘No. They made wooden balusters which have since rotted away. These have been made by the subalterns of the local division’ (regiment).

Here we have the best proof of how long the prisoners remained in the fortress. They had constructed a railing of thick balusters, which had rotted away whilst the poor victims were still languishing in their living tombs.

Over the entrance arch of the railing was the following inscription :

‘The “Brothers’ Graves” of the warriors who fell at the capture of the fortress on October 11, 1702.’

A metal cross stood over the graves. (Not far from the entrance some children were playing with two balls, one as big as a fist and the other like a small apple.) Facing the guard-house was a palisade, the work of the former prisoner, Kotshoura. Passing the officers’ dwellings along a pathway made of flagstones, we entered a wooden building which bore the inscription : ‘Manège No. 12.’

This is used for exercise by the lower officials in bad weather. The manège also serves as a theatre.

‘Let us go and have a look,’ the guide suggested.

The manège consists of one large room occupying the whole length of the building. At the

farther end of the room was a curtain with a view of the fortress on it, and two knights in mediæval attire on either side. A stage had been erected behind the curtain. A white stone building stands in close juxtaposition to the wooden manège. It was once used for the bakery, and is now turned into a shop. A little farther, close to the wall of the fortress, are the baths, built of red brick. The baths and the bakery fill a corner where, according to the gendarmes, Kalyaev, Vasilev, and Gershkovitz were hanged. These three unhappy prisoners were never confined within the precincts of the prison. Until their execution they were kept in the manège, and after their death they were taken outside the fortress walls, and buried on the northern bastion near the Royal Tower.

We hastened to quit this terrible place, and, passing the Imperial Tower, were again outside the fortress walls.

‘Will you please take us to the cemetery?’ we asked our guide.

We went round the Imperial Tower, and, passing along the wall to the north-east, we came to the bastion of the Royal Tower. In the corner to the left were visible the traces of recently dug graves.

‘Here are the graves of V`asilev and Gershkovitz, and yonder, on the other side of the tower, that of Kalyaev,’ our guide pointed out.

A landing-place for small vessels had been constructed under the walls between the Golovin and the Imperial Towers. In the bay formed by the corner bastion and the landing-place stood sheds for ships' boats. I also noticed the barge of the fortress called the 'Key.' The entrance to the landing-place is surrounded by a stone wall and trees. In the vicinity of the Imperial Tower is another landing-place for small vessels. Our inspection of the fortress was suddenly interrupted by the ringing of a bell.

'What is that?' we asked our guide.

'Midday. They say that after the capture of the fortress Peter I. ordered that just at midday all bells should be rung. This order has been scrupulously observed till the present day.'

XXVIII

A MOTHER OF THE PRISONERS

‘He who has ever been under the influence of the life of Jesus, who has borne, in the name of an ideal, humiliation, suffering, and death; he who has once considered Him as an ideal and His life as the prototype of a disinterested love,—will understand the frame of mind of the revolutionary who has been sentenced and thrown into a living tomb for his work on behalf of popular freedom.’
—V. N. FIGNER.

TALKING of the prisoners recently detained in Schluesselburg, it is impossible to pass over in silence the part taken in their fate by an octogenarian lady.

When the sufferings of our neighbours are visible to us, when we meet with misfortune at the street corners, our hearts are often touched; but when misery and misfortune are not seen, and human beings suffering hunger and cold or lying ill are hidden behind stone walls, we quietly pass by, satisfied with giving our best wishes to the unhappy ones. Luckily for humanity, there are people who do not wait till the hand of some unfortunate wretch has been stretched out to



PRINCESS MARIA MIKHAILOVNA DONDOUKOVA-KORSAKOVA

them begging for help, but who go out of their way to look for the sufferer. There are several unselfish ladies in high St. Petersburg society who penetrate from time to time within the mighty prison walls, bringing, as far as it lies in their power, consolation and help to the unhappy prisoners. One of them, the Princess Maria Mikhailovna Dondoukova-Korsakova, has devoted almost her whole life to these poor sufferers. Having learned the conditions under which the inmates of Schluesselburg lived, she took steps to obtain permission to visit them. At first obstacles were put in her way, but when the Princess expressed a wish to be herself detained in the fortress, so as to share the life of the political prisoners, the unselfishness of this old lady touched the hearts of the higher authorities, and they at last granted her request, and gave her leave to visit the prisoners whenever she pleased.

Apart from her care for the prisoners, Maria Mikhailovna's personality was in itself striking and interesting. Although I am not at present writing a full biography of the Princess, I nevertheless feel bound to mention a few details of her life, and especially to relate how she succeeded in penetrating behind the walls of Schluesselburg, so inaccessible to other mortals.

Maria Mikhailovna was born on October 9, 1827, of the princely family of the Dondoukovs-Korsakovs. The milieu in which the young Princess grew up was very interesting. It bred in her the conviction that people sin only as long as they are young, but that as soon as they grow older they cease to sin. But how bitter were her disillusionments! As she did not enjoy very robust health in her youth, her parents took her to Paris to see some physicians. It was on the eve of the Revolution of February, 1848, and the intelligent and clever girl, notwithstanding her indifferent health, could not help taking a keen interest in the political struggle of the French. Her elder brother constantly ran out into the street to watch the encounters at the barricades, and came back to describe to her all the details of the fight, whilst her younger brother played with his red flag, calling out in French, 'Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité!' The sojourn abroad proved of no avail. Maria Mikhailovna lost the use of her legs and of her right arm. On her return to Russia, by the advice of a clergyman, she tried the power of prayer, and, to the surprise of her relatives, became quite well in February, 1849. A year later, however, she had a relapse. Maria Mikhailovna again turned her attention to prayer. In order, however, to strengthen her health, the physician sent her to Gaspal, a modern health

resort of that period. Unfortunately, immediately after the second bath the Princess again fell very ill, and complained of unbearable pains in her chest and whole body. Her face grew almost black, and, framed as it was by thick, black hair, it gave the Princess an almost horrifying aspect. The physician predicted a speedy death; her father was in despair. Maria Mikhailovna again turned to prayer. She attributed her new illness to the sin she had committed in allowing herself to be allured by a worldly life, and she decided henceforth to live only for God. The next day Maria Mikhailovna was again completely well. Such quick transitions from illness to health left their mark on the Princess and made her serious above her years. She meditated on the teachings of Jesus Christ, and turned her whole attention to the poor, unhappy, suffering prisoners. Among other good deeds, she established a Society of Sisters of Mercy on her father's estate in the province of Pskov.

Maria Mikhailovna, until her thirtieth year, considered herself a follower of the Greek Orthodox faith; but it being once pointed out to her that she talked like a Protestant, the Princess, in order to fortify her faith, started to re-study the orthodox Catechism by Peter Mogila. She happened just then to visit the famous prisoner, Tkatshev. Under the influence of the Catechism,

the Princess endeavoured to explain to the prisoner the teaching of the Church. Tkatshev, however, looking the Princess straight in the face, said :

‘ Maria Mikhailovna, do you yourself believe what you are saying ?’

This phrase so forcibly struck the Princess that a revolution was produced in her soul. In the depth of her consciousness she had to admit that she did not believe all she said about religion. And henceforth she became a little more critical towards the dogmatic teaching of the Greek Orthodox Church.

St. Petersburg, at that period, being visited by many foreign preachers, Maria Mikhailovna made the acquaintance of the English representatives of the so-called Apostolic congregation, who produced a very deep impression upon her. I myself made her acquaintance in 1902. I was relating, in a small circle of her guests, the conditions under which I passed my time in Schlueselburg. What most struck the Princess in my narrative was the fact that in a Christian country the prisoners were not allowed to go to church.

There is much that is hidden from the public gaze in the political prisons in Russia, and until recently there was no opportunity of judging of the rules prevailing there. But there was one weak

spot in the regulations of the prison authorities which could not be kept secret : it was known that the political prisoners detained in the fortress in the capital, as well as those in Schluesselburg, were not allowed for many years to attend a church. Such an inexcusable and arbitrary act is revolting to a Christian soul. The authorities usually excused themselves with the argument that the political prisoners, being atheists, refused to go to church. This is, however, untrue. In my time all the cages in the church of the Preliminary Prison were occupied, on holidays, by political prisoners. As there was not a sufficient number of cages, the prisoners were taken to church by turns. I know that during the first years a whole group of prisoners in Schluesselburg used to confess themselves in a special cell arranged for that purpose, where absolution was given by the clergyman of the fortress, Jean Florinsky. One would have thought that from a Christian point of view the communion of the prisoners with the Church should rather have been encouraged than otherwise, especially when they themselves expressed a desire in that direction. The religiously inclined Princess naturally exclaimed with indignation :

‘It is through this opening that we must force admittance into the fortress !’

Maria Mikhailovna at once began to study this question. She met everywhere with sincere expressions of sympathy, but for a whole year she could obtain no serious or active help.

XXIX

A BREACH IN THE PRISON WALLS

‘In pagan times these beautiful moral ideas were often expressed by philosophers and other people seeking after Divine truth; there are, therefore, occasions on which the Christian has to learn unselfishness from those very people who deny the blessed power of Christianity.’

PRINCESS M. M. DONDOUKOVA-KORSAKOVA.

ON November 4, 1903, in the evening, Maria Mikhailovna informed me of her desire to be herself detained in the Schluesselburg with a view to helping the prisoners there. I remember that I merely shook my head in sign of my incredulity, considering her wish as a whim impossible of realization. But I heard soon after that on November 10 Maria Mikhailovna had paid a visit to the Minister of the Interior, V. K. Plehve, whom she found very sympathetic towards her request—viz., that a church for the prisoners should be built in Schluesselburg. It took, however, six months of continual work and reminders before the ministerial sympathy reached the Chancery, and something definite at last appeared

on paper. The question raised was as follows : ' Would it be possible to use the Light Tower for the purposes of a church, bearing in mind the fact that the prisoners would have to be divided up into two distinctly separate groups—one group comprising the prisoners of the Old Prison, the other those of the New ?'

A deputation came down to Schluesselburg, which, after inspecting the tower, came to the conclusion that to build a new church would involve considerable expense, as the workmen would have to break through the outer wall of the fortress. In any case, the question of building was taken into consideration. Very soon afterwards Maria Mikhailovna was informed that permission was granted her to visit the prisoners in Schluesselburg. What the relatives of the prisoners had not been able to obtain in the course of twenty years the Princess managed to obtain in seven months. The gendarmes were astonished that a feeble old woman had been able to conquer so easily all the obstacles separating the prison from the outside world, but the prisoners themselves were even more surprised. At first they could find no explanation for such an event ; but on making the acquaintance of the Princess, they understood that she had been actuated by sheer Christian love. V. N. Figner could not refrain from exclaiming :

‘How is it you have been allowed to come to us?’

Vera Nicolaevna wept copiously during her first interview with the Princess. Nicolai Alexandrovitch Morozov, too, was greatly moved and highly pleased at her visit. The Princess, on that memorable first day, June 30, 1904, also visited M. V. Novoroussky and M. J. Aschenbrenner. The Commandant of the fortress, who accompanied the Princess, advised her not to come again for a little while, so that the prisoners might be able to talk the matter over among themselves and compare their impressions. And, indeed, scarcely had the Princess left the prison when a noise of knocking was heard in every direction: the prisoners were talking to one another through the walls.

I shall not attempt to tell of the hope, joy, and consolation Maria Mikhailovna brought into this world of unhappy sufferers. I leave it to them to relate their feelings in simpler detail.

Here is what one of the prisoners, whom I saw two years later, said to me about the visits of Maria Mikhailovna. The Princess Dondoukova-Korsakova was the first to throw a bomb against the strong walls of the fortress; she was the first to make a breach in them; and the secret prison, jealously guarded for many years, at last opened its doors and gave liberty to its inmates.

Ten days after her first visit a fresh surprise

came to the prisoners in the arrival of the St. Petersburg Metropolitan, Anthony. For twenty years they had only seen the officials on duty, and now they were suddenly visited on their own initiative by a Princess and the Metropolitan. Was it a sign that the impenetrability of the fortress walls had considerably diminished? Hope for a speedy release entered the hearts of the prisoners. Their new frame of mind evidently did not escape the notice of the prison authorities, for under some pretext the Princess was refused admission on July 14 and 15. On the 15th, Plehve, who had authorized her visits, was killed. The Princess returned to St. Petersburg, but did not for one moment forget her new friends. On July 26 she went to see the Under-Secretary of the murdered Minister, requesting him to confirm the authorization she had previously been granted. Her request was refused. She at once made up her mind to take a more decisive step. She addressed her petition direct to the Emperor, and two weeks later her request was granted. The Cabinet Minister *pro tem.*, P. N. Durnovo, even authorized her to converse with V. N. Figner without witnesses, and if she chose to take foreign books to the prisoners. In order to share the joy of her visits to Schluesselburg with me, Maria Mikhailovna sent me, on August 14, part of the presents which she

had, on the previous day, received from Vera N. Figner: they consisted of a bouquet of flowers, two cucumbers, and a basket-full of fruit. In the autumn, presents from the prisoners literally poured in upon Maria Mikhailovna. Vera N. Figner gave her a bouquet of flowers, two cucumbers, and a basket-full of strawberries, black currants, and raspberries; N. A. Morozov an apparatus by which to fix the position of the stars at any time of the year; M. V. Novoroussky a cross worked of bone. Someone hastened to present her with the first apples, another with a minutely prepared herbarium, a third with a little wooden box, and a fourth with a vase. In a word, every one of them endeavoured in his or her own way to express love and gratitude to the indefatigable old lady for her endeavours to bring some joy into their lives.

Notwithstanding her advanced age, Maria Mikhailovna astonished all her acquaintances with her activity and energy.

Who would ever have thought that this tall octogenarian lady, walking long distances on foot, had in her youth more than once been condemned to death by the physicians? The obstacles she met on her way not only did not slacken her energy, but, on the contrary, lent her new strength, stimulating her to more daring and

decisive steps. It was not easy to resist the clever, persistent Princess. While visiting the prisoners in Schluesselburg, she did not lose sight of her aim to get a church for them. She continued to insist upon its erection, leaving the authorities to decide as to the manner of building it. What she deemed important was that the prisoners should be allowed to be present at Divine service. In September, 1904, the hideous cavern of the fortress again opened, giving access to three more prisoners, V. N. Figner, M. J. Ashenbrenner, and V. Gr. Ivanov. Maria Mikhailovna's joy at this event was somewhat embittered by the fact that Vera Nicolaevna was exiled to the distant cold Nenox, in the Government of Arkhangelsk. In October she again had a disappointment. On the pretext of a change of Ministers, the prison authorities again refused her access to the prison. But after repeated requests and efforts she once more had her way.

In the meantime the Princess did not forget the exiled V. N. Figner. After corresponding with the latter for some time, the Princess went to see her on January 17, 1905. She found the exile suffering from scurvy and shattered nerves. Torn away from her old friends, Vera Nicolaevna was forced to live under the continual supervision of soldiers in a cold dwelling on the shores of the White Sea.

On her return to the banks of the Neva, the Princess again sought to visit her friends in Schluesselburg. Permission was granted her under certain restrictions. She was not allowed to talk except in the presence of the Commandant, and had first to hand him over for inspection the books she brought.

Maria Mikhailovna now turned her attention to something even better. It was time, she thought, to fix a limit to the period of detention for the Schluesselburg prisoners. As the maximum period for penal servitude in the mines is fixed in our legislature at twenty years, she considered that all the prisoners ought to be at once released. For this purpose Maria Mikhailovna visited one of the Grand Duchesses and various high officials. But it was found impossible in high circles to release the old fighters for freedom, surrounded as they were by an aureole of martyrdom, during the then troublous times.

In the fortress itself things did not continue without a hitch. The Princess was told that the prison authorities began to regret their indulgence. They found that the prisoners, relying on her protection in St. Petersburg, allowed themselves to disobey orders.

A fresh conflict ensued.

XXX

THE PRAYERS OF THE MARTYRS

‘Thinking of Schluesselburg, I remember my sojourn in the fortress, and am surprised how I can now work, talk, read, sing, and laugh. It is strange, and it seems to me as if it were someone else doing this.’—L. A. WOLKENSTEIN.

‘If it is impossible to set free all the prisoners at once, they could be released one by one,’ said the Princess. The first on the list was N. P. Starodvorsky. I do not know whether the Princess helped him, but in any case, N. P. Starodvorsky was soon after taken from Schluesselburg to St. Petersburg. On August 12, however, Maria Mikhailovna suddenly learned that Nicolai Petrovitsh had been taken back to the fortress. There had been a mistake, she was told.

On the eve of the Manifesto of October 17, 1905, Maria Mikhailovna suddenly returned to St. Petersburg, in order to present a petition to the Emperor in regard to the political prisoners. Four days later, on October 21, an amnesty was

declared which affected nine of the ancient inmates of Schluesselburg.

The activity, however, of the energetic Princess in the interests of the prisoners did not abate. In those days she had to work even harder for them. With an energy quite surprising in a woman of her age, she helped to find out the whereabouts of the relatives of the released prisoners, at the same time carrying on negotiations with the higher authorities. Her sister's house served as an evening meeting-place, where the relatives came to see the released prisoners. It was impossible to find Maria Mikhailovna alone at those moments. Here was the mother of one released prisoner in the drawing-room, the brother of another in the dining-room, and in the boudoir of the Princess the sister of a third. And so it went on every day, until all the released prisoners left for their homes. But after their friendly relations within the walls of the fortress, they could not bid farewell to the Princess for ever.

The numerous letters she received clearly proved how dear this amiable woman had become to the former prisoners.

‘I think,’ writes one of them on October 29, from the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, ‘that your habitual delicacy made you leave me during the first days entirely to my mother, sisters, or

brother, although you are aware that you occupy in my heart an equal place with them.'

All the letters received by Maria Mikhailovna from her Schluesselburg friends, now in various corners of Russia, breathe an honest and sincere love, a feeling of deep reverence and of eternal gratitude towards this—in our time, at least—unique woman. How did the question about the building of a church in the fortress end?

In December, 1904, the Director of the Police Department visited the Princess, and pretended that the political prisoners had themselves expressed no wish to attend a church. The Princess contradicted his statement. He then proposed the already existing church of St. Philip. For six months the police continued to discuss the question whether to utilize this church or to build a new one. At last, in the first days of August, 1905, a decision was arrived at to prolong the New Prison at the southern end, and utilize the upper part of the prison for a church.

The prisoners, however, protested against such a decision. 'It was not fitting,' they said, 'to build a church over a cesspool.' This objection was considered justifiable at St. Petersburg, and an order was issued to pull down the brick wall separating the prison courtyard from the 'Brothers' Graves,' and build a church there. But meanwhile, whilst the building material was

being brought, the Schluesselburg prison was abolished.

The foundations for a church were, however, laid in April, 1906, and in May the window arches were in course of erection.

The most remarkable phenomenon in the church question is the following fact: The request was first addressed to one of the Generals visiting the prison in 1885 ; till 1905, when the prison was abolished, nothing was done.

After the departure of the last prisoners, however, on January 30, 1906, the authorities of the fortress suddenly manifested feverish activity in erecting a church which no one now required.

Will the building be finished, or will the walls be pulled down ? This question does not interest me. But I can foresee the day when on this island, nourished for centuries with the blood and tears of political and religious martyrs, the Russian nation itself will erect a splendid temple, which shall overshadow the bones of those who have fallen in the struggle for faith and freedom.

Where have been uttered such fiery prayers, where such desperate cries, where such horrible lamentations by the tortured ones, as within the walls of the Schluesselburg fortress ? The heart of the Crucified Saviour is nearest to

the place of suffering. Heaven is ready to answer prayers coming from this small point on the globe. There has been enough sobbing and weeping. It is time to drown it in a hymn of eternal love and truth.

GLOSSARY

Arsheen, Russian measure of length; equal to 2 feet and 4·242 inches.

Copeck, Russian coin worth about a farthing; 1 rouble equals 100 copecks.

Icon, *ikon*, holy image.

Kasha, Russian national dish; gruel.

Manège, riding-school.

Narodnaya Volya, popular freedom.

Orekhov. *Orekh* is the Russian for 'nut.'

Sazhen, Russian measure of length; equal to 1·167 English fathoms, or about 7 feet.

Stundists, Russian religious sect.

Tz-ob, *Tzob*, *Tzobé*, onomatopœic exclamation.

Vasistas, skylight.

Vershok, the sixteenth part of an arsheen.

Verst. One verst equals 3,500 English feet.

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